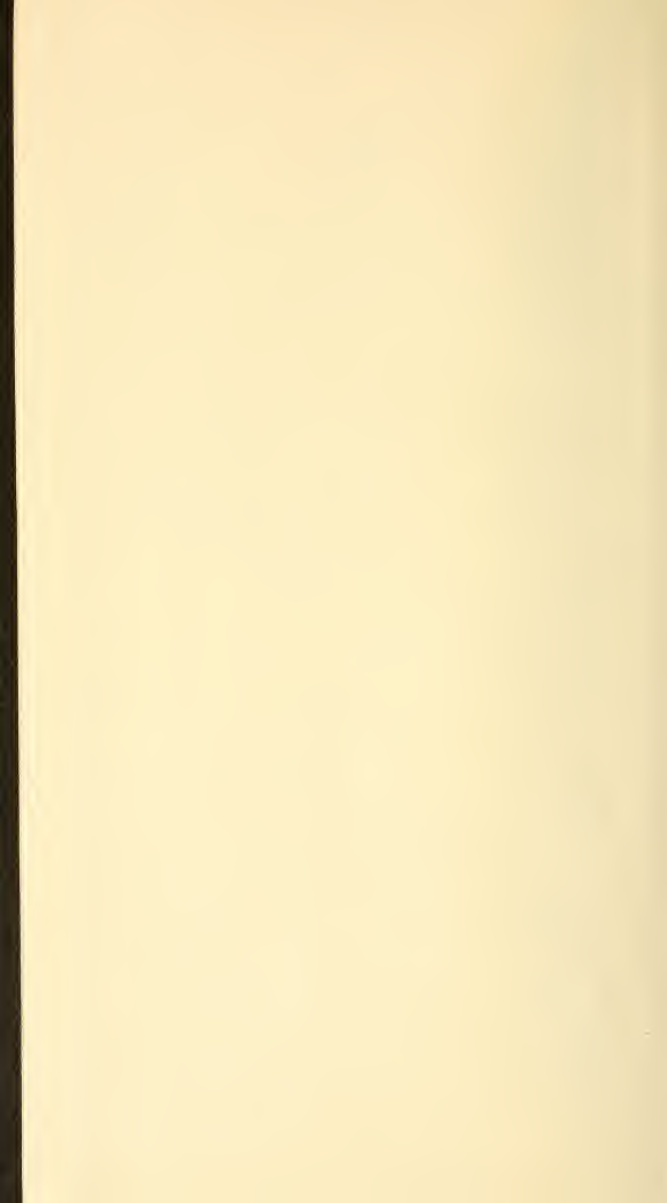








NIAGARA,
JEPTHATH,
REMARKS UPON
THE DEFENCE OF WESSEX
BY ALFRED THE GREAT:
WITH OTHER COMPOSITIONS,

IN VERSE AND PROSE.

Wessex. The Great
But how the subject theme may gang,
Let time and chance determine;
Perhaps it may turn out a sang,
Perhaps turn out a sermon.

BURNS.

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To

William James Grant, Esquire.

Flattery is so disgusting to the really worthy and estimable, and so disgraceful to the writer who, by it's use, holds himself up to scorn and contempt; that the Author best consults your character and his own, by simply requesting that you will honour him by accepting this little book.



THE DEPRECATION.

VANITY, the besetting sin of little minds, having prompted me to commit myself in print, I can only beg off from a good, sound chastisement, by pleading that the petty ambition of a school-boy having lured me into writing nonsense-verses, I have since beguiled the weary gaps of nothing-to-do in a laborious life, by allowing fancy to wander far away from splashing gutters and smoky chimnies, into regions which the bodily eye never saw.

A lurking conceit, that it is just possible some of those kind persons, whose generous feeling has rounded off some of the asperities of my road, may be pleased to think me not altogether unworthy of remembrance, leads me to

ask them to accept this book, and sometimes to recall to memory one who does not very readily forget a kindness ; and it will highly gratify me, if but one can feel in it's perusal a tithe of the intense pleasure attendant upon it's composition.

I am sure that they will be merciful judges, and try me rather by my motives than by the accomplishment of my gratifying tasks : but as, by mischance, a stray copy may fall into the hands of some one who is critically disposed ; and as, when a criminal does run mad in print, he is justly held amenable to those whom he annoys, and is bound to render an account of his vagabond birth, parentage and education ; I do most penitently confess, that no out-of-London vicinage was polluted by my first breath ; but that I was honestly and regularly born within the sound of Bow-bells the wind setting hard from any point of the rainy quarter, as a good and true Citizen-and-Haberdasher is in duty bound to have been : and, miserable wretch that I am, I have since seen very little out of London, although I am quite certain that roses are red,

lilies are orange-coloured, sweet-briar pricks one's fingers, streamlets are black, and sparrow-music is very exhilarating.

I have however, as a set-off, seen much of London ; know Temple-bar extremely well, have a passing acquaintance with St. Paul's, and with Bow-Church steeple, have now and then seen a Grass-hopper a-top of Change, but have never been upon drinking terms with Aldgate-pump. The civic watering place, Billingsgate dock, is fresh in my recollection, and the Pageants at Red-riff, One-tree hill at Greenwich, and the White-bait of Blackwall are deeply treasured in my memory. I once found that I had lost myself at Ball's Pond, when upon a tour of discovery for a green field, which I did not find ; and, returning from a business trip to Auld Reekie, and getting out of sight of land, was astounded by the sublimely magnificent sensation, that it was very much like being stuck in the middle of a big punch-bowl.

By parentage, upon the one side at least, I am a Cockney of the very purest water, traceable

downward from the Great Plague, and how much further upward it would be plaguey hard to say ; and upon the other, there is a dash of Saxon or Norseman blood, I really cannot tell which.

By long residence, I am also a most unmixed, and unsophisticated Cockney, located hard by the Classic region of Grub-street, and not very far away from the last resting place of that notoriously London-born-criminal John Milton.

As to my education, I learnt great A and bounding B from a horn-book ; and am quite sure that Grammar is a most rascally, ill-looking little thing with a sticky yellow-bunting cover, well thumbed, and dirtily dog's-eared at each corner.

I do then most contritely plead that I am a genuine, uncontaminated Londoner, and therefore no more answerable for erroneous ideas, than was my lovely and kind-hearted compatriot, who saved the chicken-bones for her brother's horse, or the nice, dear little fellows who pitch nuts at the lions to fatten them.

I have read, somewhere, that there is a " Cock-

ney-School" of Song-smiths, as our worthy Northern ancestry used, in their sauciness, to call them,—I know not what is the condemnatory characteristic of that School ; I know only that Jemmy Wright's Caron-house, was a deuced flogging one after he had been drunk ; but I am still perfectly assured that it must be something extremely wicked, superlatively contemptible and most deservedly sneer-at-able ; and that, whatever else it be, I must be the minutest member of it's most diminutive form ; for, there I stand, uncomfortable urchin, jammed into the corner, upon a high stool, with a fool's-cap on, whimpering with a little thumb in my eye, and an ugly, old A.B.C.-woman poking a big long cane at me.

Whatever be the villany of that Cockney school, I cannot get away from the questionable honour of my association, and must wear the glitter of such delinquency as blushinglly as I can.

Having thus fairly discharged my conscience, and done reparation to my deeply-insulted, injured and offended Country, I have only further

to plead, in mitigation, that, having always been a wayward, unmanageable chap ; having been, of old, accustomed to do as I pleased, when I could get my own way, to lay down my own laws, and to break them when they pinched ; I have, in some instances, adopted a form of composition, which, even judged by the rules of some civilized writers, admits of a little occasional kicking over the traces, as but at worst, a venial and youthful sally.

If however, The Schoolmaster, should find any outbreak beyond all justificatory precedent ; and if, he should discover that, in some violent plunge, Priscian's head has also been broken ; I must, right humbly, request him to take up his pen and mend it : but I would also most beseechingly implore him, to try whether curtailment or elongation to his bed of Procrustes, might not mar more than it would mend.

I have a sort of eccentric notion that the true test of a Rhythmical line, is not a rigorously exact number of syllables, but the quantity and expressiveness of sound :—that a syllable consisting even

but of one letter, may, by it's accentuation, be fully equal to two of ordinary force ;—and, that a word, it may be of even five syllables, may, in common pronunciation, be really reduced to the bare quantity of another word of but two syllables : and if I err not in my recollection, instances might readily be adduced to shew that, in some of our best writers, not only are there lines which overrun, or do not reach, the syllabic measure ; but that, in very many instances, the euphony of a line has not only been destroyed, but Priscian's head most unmercifully mashed into mummy, by a too strict attention to the due syllabic measure.

I leave that question however for the digestion of better stomachs than my own. I have taken my own course, and must stand or fall by my own unruly devices.

I have a slight, an evanescent hope, that, although my readers may neither derive instruction nor amusement from, they will neither be injured in head nor heart by anything which I have herein submitted to them ; and, it will indeed be to me a great pleasure should I hear, that if I

shall not have done good, I have at least not inflicted harm.

In completion of this deprecation of chastisement, I take leave to run wild again, and earnestly to say, with respect to my humble aspiration,

Nay, check not my hope, though it smile to deceive,
I mistrust, and I fear, yet still fondly believe,
Yet cherish I still the delight it has given,
'Though a dream it may be, 'tis a dream of heaven.

Nay, crush not my hope, though a bubble it be,
It's beautiful colours are rainbows to me ;
'Though it burst, I will dwell on the bliss it has given,
Remembering the dream, as a dream of heaven.

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NIAGARA.

WHAT wild enthusiast, with adventurous hand,
Rashly shall dare to intonate the lyre?
What prophet spirit o'er thy fearful strand
Shall breathe, in awful cadences of fire,
Strains which angelic minstrels might inspire;
And from their embryo nothingness upraise,
With magic hand, the intellectual choir;
Pour in 'rapt sounds a kindred flood of praise,
And draw down Heaven to hear the blest melodious
lays?

What limpid wave reflect thy rushing tide,
What gleaming fancy thy vast might pourtray,
Diffuse o'er space her sunshine tissue wide,
Arrest the glories of thy floating spray,
And bid thy fleeting colours live for aye;
And rein thy coursers in her mimic thrall,
And bid thy eddy car her will obey?
Smiling in strength, thy ceaseless volumes fall,
And with exulting laugh thou proudly scornest all.

Thy white mist rises, as ascends to heaven
Some holy altar's pure oblation fire ;
Not as foul steams, whose foetid tresses riven,
Unveil the vultures of war's funeral pyre,
Where groaning fathers o'er their sons expire ;
And, wailing loud, of every hope despoiled,
Lovers the blood-locks from their lovers tear ;
And fierce-contending with the jackall wild,
The maddening mother shrieks, and faints upon her
child :

But as the clear light of beneficence,
Radiant of peace and redolent of joy ;
Effacing tears and blushes of offence,
And bidding grovelling sadness soar on high,
On rapturous wings of silent ecstasy :
But as that holy dew of holiest earth,
Ere man had stained her with his infamy,
Which, mingling with the angel's sacred mirth,
Returned imbued with praise, and sanctified her birth.

Still, as I breathless, fixed in rigid trance,
And fascinating terror stand at gaze ;
Volumed on volumed rapids swiftly glance
And die, as time's vast myriads of days
Blend into undistinguishable haze ;
Save that lone fragments of the world gone by,
Scrolled o'er with crime and bloodshed, yet amaze
The seekers of man's direful history,
Summed up in rending curse and bitterest agony.

So falls thy flood, so swiftly plunges down
 Some gallant vessel caught within thy whirl,
 By one rude crash in countless fragments thrown;
 Thy melting eddies o'er the shivers curl,
 And far and wide the stranded cordage hurl,
 Speaking thy wild tremendous energy;
 As, amid thy kindred deluge, when from the swirl
 Re-nascent mountains reared their pinnets high,
 And one wide-bosomed calm soft wooed the evening
 sky :

Glittering, the ripple on the horizon, marked
 The whirlwind dipping his ferocious van;
 Harshly around destruction's hell-hounds barked,
 Black yawning chasms through riven mountains ran,
 And one shrill shriek burst from ark-shielded man;
 Onward, right onward, as the depths unclosed,
 Swept he the vast waste with capacious span,
 Hurling huge monsters into eternal snows,
 Where no exploring steps e'er break their fixed repose.

Deep as I drink, with never-sated eye,
 Thy glorious beauty, stealing melancholy
 Palsies my senses; yet the alluring tie
 Snaps not; but, traversing in agony
 Athwart thy headlong current, vacantly
 Seeing, I see not, yet still gaze upon
 Thy alluring horrors, dim and gloomily;
 As wreck-left on some bleak rock, barren, lone,
 Despairing seamen watch the tempest-tokening sun.

Vast world of waters, ever pouring down
And ever still to pour ; vicissitude
Of nature shakes thee not ; thou holdest on
Thy stedfast course, and no similitude
Hast ever found. Sublimest magnitude
Has o'er thy ample bosom wide outspread
His broad dominion ; rough rocks, rent and rude
Grace, but mar not the honours of thy head,
And wearying time on thee has no dishonour shed.

So fearlessly, majestically great,
Marches in meek, dove-eyed benignity,
Unquailed by storm, unbowed by age's weight,
Kindred in spirit, Christianity ;
And still shall march in calm security ;
Close to her bosom, with unaltered mein,
Though hurtling arrows fall incessantly,
She presses holiest hope, and smiles serene,
As terrors were but breath to wave her sun-locks
sheen.

The saffron eye of morn awakening,
Looks from her waving couch of orient gold :
Gaily the blithe bird's earliest twittering
Bids fairest flowers their faëry cups unfold,
And flaunting tendrils laughingly behold,
Pearl-dropt and pranked with choicest jewellery,
The brilliant leaflets pure from Nature's mould :
Exult the meads, and pleasure's iris-eye
Gleams with delight amid the enchanting minstrelsy.

And, bending in the light breeze, bough and stem,
 O'erhanging dark the steep-enshadowed tide ;
 Honoured in age's snowy diadem,
 Wave in consonancy their tresses wide,
 As the fierce dog-star, azure-canopied,
 Pouring effulgently his tempered rays,
 Sports dalliant on thy bosom : vivified,
 Rises in incense thy pellucid haze
 And sward, and sky, and flood, their blest Creator
 praise.

And surges, leaping from thy mountain crest,
 Melt in the western red-glare, lovelily
 Dying in radiant sweetness. Pure her breast,
 And cold as pure, the Naiad bashfully
 Wells out her snowy vases ; limpidly
 As beauty's tear drops, ever still they flow,
 And Dryad sisters, sighing piteously,
 View their own fate in each impulsive throe,
 And, fascinated, love, the sanctifying woe.

Wide in thy opalescent billows float,
 Colours irradiant as the hues of heaven ;
 The iridescent glow, the glittering mote,
 The broad clear beam, by sunny mist-wreaths riven,
 And blending, as, imagination given,
 Blend poet-dreams and darkness. Follies flash
 O'er man as o'er thy current ; bright and even
 They allure him, or, impetuously rash,
 Hurl him, and all his hopes, into countless nothings
 dash.

In thy receding crescent dim light dwells,
While o'er thy wide convexity the sun
Gleams gloriously. Elate thy bosom swells,
And swifter plunge thy gladdening volumes down
As glory urged and bade them hurry on.
Like warriors burning for avenging fight,
Flash the swift floods thy glittering edge upon,
Glare the white surges more intensely bright,
And the quenched eye, subdued, shrinks from the excessive light.

Or, amid thy roaring stillness, peal on peal,
Reverberating thunders rudely crash;
Heard, yet scarce heard, though on thy pinnacle
The herald lightnings in continuous flash,
Glance on thy heaving wave, or fiercely dash
Into thine inmost womb; and the waked ear
Listens, and thinks it hears thy rival rash
Groaning, as suffering spirits in despair
Groan in the dark, the drear, the eternal sepulchre.

Or, bursting from the death-trance, answering loud,
As blessed hosts contending who shall sing
Best their Creator; emulous thy flood,
And the air-angel awfully echoing
In strenuous chorus. Dark o'er-hovering
Black the dense clouds thy wide expanse o'erveil;
And all, save sound, in slumber deadening,
The rapt ear dwells upon thy rushing gale,
Though pausing Nature seem beneath the storm to
quail.

Then, suddenly, the wild glare gleams around,
 Pouring its forked, ire-enkindled brand,
 As stains the streams, as desolates the ground,
 War's parching breath, thy poor, devoted land,
 Once noble Græcia ; yet the scourge beneath
 Thou fashionest the weapons of command,
 And Heaven shall yield thee yet the conqueror wreath,
 And Mahmoud's blood-stained bones bleach on thy
 warrior heath.

Thee, vast Niagara, no tyrant curbs,
 Though oft the tempest, burning in his might,
 Thy mild serenity awhile disturbs,
 And dares thee, placid conqueror, to the fight.
 Hurling aloft in maniac despite,
 Spoils torn from sultry, equinoctial plain,
 Hopes he, elate, thy Naiads to affright,
 To bind thy spirit in the enfeebling chain,
 And o'er thy smiling strand, firm fix his brutal reign,

Once owned, fixed ever. Thou to fear or own
 Sublimely scornest. Let the wild hurricane
 Chafe thee and tear thee ! be thy rooted throne
 Tornado whitened ! let his vengeance rain
 As rained Gomorrah's fire ! in disdain,
 As Britain viewed the threat-invading force,
 Thou, unsusceptible of age or pain,
 Unheeding glidest from thine eternal source,
 And still pursuest on, thy steady, fate-like course.

Even Winter, stern and fearless, whose chill throne,
In bleak, fantastic splendour overspreads
The solitary poles, oft trenches on
Thy neighbour forests, thy consanguined meads,
Yet pauses at thy threshold. Freedom shone
For ever there ! for ever shall the sun
Greet the proud, northern child ; and as her eye
Aurora-brightened flashes, every zone
Shall hail the cherub ; shall, like thee, rely
On Heaven, assert her right, and raise her head on high.

Often thy pale blue mist, inspiriting
Shoot lucent rays ; as Heaven's prophecy,
Man's dead-blank future fate illumining,
Peoples the dim haunt of obscurity ;
And, as thy booming thunders echo by,
Oft, clinging to some grey branch, whose frail leaves
Shiver within thy wavelet ; eagerly
Seek I thy depth, and as the billow heaves
Blithe fancy, with the spray, her visions interweaves.

And the soft moonbeams mitigate the scene
Of horror : thy dark current dimpling
With evanescent beauties, while between
Each intonating crash, light revelling
In their own music, night birds twittering,
Then bursting in one flood of melody,
Spell the 'rapt soul, that on the heaven-ward wing
Of ecstasy swift floating, soars on high,
And hears angelic strains, angelic minstrelsy.

Or, sinking into sadness, loves the light
 Upon thy elfin-tresses glittering ;
 Or marks, with happy, infantine delight,
 The broad orb, from her high sphere, brightening
 In thy pure, molten mirror, or chequering
 Thy sportive surges, from the dark abyss
 Leaping as fire-flies, gently wakening
 Earth's pearl-drops into transient brilliantness,
 Then shouting, plunge down deep, in jocund happiness.

Oh, I have stood upon thy trembling verge
 As, on the edge of time's departing scroll
 Some holy spirit : on the deepening dirge,
 The solemn death-knell, wondrous visions roll
 Of angels beckoning the kindred soul :
 Islands of bliss, glad glory's golden gleam,
 Realms where pure spirits exercise controul,
 Altars and temples of the dread Supreme,
 Bathed in one brilliant, blest, clear, crime-unspotted
 beam.

Yes,—oft I stand, in melancholy bliss,
 Shrunk in myself, and sinking into earth
 In deep abasement, o'er thy vast abyss,
 And daring not to ask, whence drew I birth,
 Or, what I am ; or how the shuddering earth
 Could bear such reptile wretches ; how the day-
 -Ephemerons can rush in anger forth,
 O'er the sand-grain a conqueror's march essay,
 And microscopic space, bind in disdainful sway ?

Lords of a moment.—In thy awful view
Who shall be great : who count his ancestry :
Who dare the irrefluent current to pursue,
Trace his continuous line, through regality,
Up to a source of blood, or villainy ?
Oh, who shall, vauntingly, aloud proclaim
His pomp, his circumstance of heraldry,
O'er thee resound his ancestral name,
And, to thy stream outspread his muster-roll of fame ?

Low, on thy margin, pride sinks self-abased,
And pert conceit, and pampered vanity,
Into their native nothingness debased,
And conscious of their fond credulity,
Sigh, blushing, at the sad reality ;
And, in thy kingly presence, cowering,
Thee-daunted, chrysome in humility,
O'ercount, in lowliest tremor murmuring,
And weep, as still they count each empty triumphing.

Weak, worthless, vile, and despicable, all ;
As far beneath man's truest dignity
As thou above the meanest springlet-fall
In tinkling current glancing merrily.
Thou, in thine own severe simplicity,
Sublimely calm, appallingly serene,
Glidest in lone, tremendous majesty :—
Absorbed, mute wonder, with expressive mien
Lost in abstraction stands, and meditates the scene.

THE GAZELLES.

"Beware," said the old Gazelle, "beware,
The hunter has spread his treacherous snare,
The tiger has stretched his devouring fangs,
Already I see thy expiring pangs."

"Truce, mother, truce; the sun is awake,
His light decks the tresses of jungle and brake:
Fear not, oh, fear not: I am agile and fleet,
Tigers drink not my blood, hunters snare not my feet."

No tiger appeared as she bounded with glee,
Elate from constraint to be happily free:
"Oh beauty," she cried, as she gazed in the stream,
"It was jealousy croaked in my fond mother's dream."

Curvetting, and tripping, and ambling, and leaping
Now gazing at buds, now in wild blossoms peeping;
A beautiful, burnished, resplendently bright,
Gem-chequered serpent attracted her sight.

Lithely he twined, as she drew back amazed,
Glided he gently, as curious she gazed:
Glittered his scales, as irresolute she strayed,
And glanced his keen eye, as her course was delayed.

She stopped, his heart danced, as her eye met his glance,
He besought, and she stood fixed in tremulous trance,
Advancing, inhaling his poisonous breath,
Dizzy she grew, and then rushed on her death.

THE SNIPE AND THE RUFFS.

“A smoky house and scolding wife,”
The adage says, “are plagues for life :”
But other plagues beset our houses,
And other ills annoy our spouses,
And prudent bodies look a little
Beyond a frown, or a crocky kettle.
A young snipe, from the streams affrighted,
Is on a common, wild, benighted,
And from the howling winds that pelt her
Hither and thither runs for shelter.
At length, beneath some beetling bluffs,
Finds she a leash of spruce-dressed Ruffs,
Long-beaked, long-legged, and smartly speckled,
Black, white, and brown, and auburn, freckled.

Lack they not hospitality,
But with extremest courtesy
Request she will with them repose
Until the rude tempest overblows.
Much wonders she, for hope will spring
Even from beneath destruction's wing ;
And, out of house, and out of home,
Good fortune may have bidden her roam
Hither, to meet at length a mate.
Admires she much their air and gait,
Admires she much the sanded floor
With fairy-circlets traversed o'er ;
And, growing bold, as they caress her,
Of nuptials talk, and gently press her,
Gently as rival birds are able,
To take the " upper end of the table ;"
She questions, " why, within a zone
Each should possess a mimic throne,
And raise the ruff and dart the beak
If another the charmed line inbreak ?"
" Each keeps his portion." " Thank you kindly,
I enter not in engagements blindly ;
If brothers thus can disagree
It will be no house of peace for me ;
Farewell," she cries, " the family
Of Ruffs lack unanimity,
And, poverty with peace, is better
Than misery in a golden fetter."

THE PLUME AND THE GEM.

BELINDA, who knows not the fair ?
 Profuse her waving locks of hair,
 Profuse her gems, their dazzling light
 Than her pure sparkling eyes less bright ;
 Less lovely red than either cheek
 Aurora's blushes when they break
 The autumnal curtains of the sun ;
 Less brilliant, his fierce race half run,
 Is Phœbus, than her lightning wit :
 But added charms are requisite
 Even to make Belinda fair.
 She therefore pinned within her hair
 A plume, oh, such a plume as never
 Before put ladies into a fever !
 Gorgeous, and beauteous, and delightful,
 All other plumes, to thee were frightful !
 Oh, as supremely blest, it dangled,
 And waved it's graceful head, and angled
 With linked fibrils, as it strove
 To catch motes in the beams of love ;
 Damsels of certain ages frowned,
 Pert damsellettes as fairly swooned ;
 Dandies, and beaux, and maccaronies,
 Grew rough and rude as Exmoor ponies,

Snorted and kicked, and stung with spite,
Threatened themselves into a fright.
He was a venturous he, whose stupid
And misty eyelids never saw Cupid,
With burnished shaft and tight-strained bow,
Dodging beneath Belinda's brow,
Watching with keen, consummate art
To launch his arrow into the heart ;
And glance, and cower, look coy, look sly,
Then, in a moment, slap, let fly
The thrilling barb.—Oh, stupid wretch !
Dare you of art or science preach
Who never saw electricity
Corruscate from a lady's eye ?
Oh, stolid lecturer, how dare
You scrutinize the blushing fair ?
How dare you gaze : how dare you venture
So near to love's attractive centre :
How dare you, with a cringing grin,
Crinkle the crow's feet, scar your thin
Bachelor lips with smirking simper,
And for that plume your wishes whimper ?
Belinda, condescending creature,
In loveliest smiles arrayed each feature ;
Unclasping from its balmy seat
A diamond gave she in emeralds set ;
And, loosening from her auburn tresses
With many kind, endeared caresses,
Surrendered into his custody
The Triumph of Plumasserie.—

As opera-dancers, if they are talked with,
By nobles, joked with, laughed with, walked with,
Feel strawberry leaves on their foreheads grow,
And ape the aristocratic bow ;
Peered with a jewel, Monsieur Plume,
Waved, as he strutted round the room,
Bestowing on all the Plumes in the crowd
A gracious, patronizing nod.
His heightened pride ascended higher,
Glowed fiercer his ambition's fire,
Xerxes, who in himself embodied
Millions, felt not so over-godded
As wondering damsels saw them fall
Jewels and feather, equal all,
When weighed in the subtilized air
Of the lecturing philosopher.—
The jewel smiled, nor felt degraded,
Although by a feather overshadowed.
But when, within an ample brim,
She saw the gossamer trapping swim,
Puffed, whirled, and driven by every gale
Which beauty's roseate lips exhale ;
And the jewel, scarcely less in weight,
Or in air or water, beaming bright,
More splendid, as if distress and woe
Gave truest worth a truer glow :
Belinda, sighing as she spake,
Owned herself silly, blind, and weak :
Conscious, 'though in the vacuum
Of a suffocating drawing room,

Feathers may chance to "bear the bell;"
Yet, in the deep, sequestered dell
Of social life, supremely blest,
Secure the fond affections rest,
Supporting and supported by
Worth that despises rivalry.

THE BALLOON AND THE MIST-BUBBLES.

"Oh, la!" cried the girls, and "hurrah!" cried the
boys,

Until half merry England ran wild with their noise;
As a dapper balloon, with a man dangling down,
Like a mouse in a tether, amazed London town.

"Behold me, behold me," cried out the balloon,
As some mist-bubbles passed on their voyage towards
the moon;

"Behold how superbly, how nimbly I gallop
Over billows of air, like my Lord Mayor's gilt shallop."

"Aye, sail, sail away," laughed the merry-grig bubbles,
"Like a young bear, you are but beginning your
troubles;

Should you burst.”—“ Should I burst,” twisting round
with a caper,
“ Should I burst, should I burst,” cried the bag-full of
vapour :

“ And if I should burst ? Should ye burst, who would
sorrow ?

But my death would enrich all the papers to-morrow ;
While, if ye broke, ten millions such bubbles of wet,
Not a line e’er would furnish for Fashion’s gazette.”

“ Did we burst,” cried the gigglers, “ though unnoticed
in rain,

Our sportive lives would not have passed by in vain ;
While yours, were your bright deeds all told over double,
Would be nonsense, and ridicule, glitter, and trouble.”

Apply this to heroes, to statesmen, to kings,
To lordlings, to ladylings, garters, or strings,
Knights, squires, or peasants, you ever will find
Air-balloons are of less use than rain to mankind.

THE ANT AND THE BUTTERFLY.

“ Good morrow to you, Mistress Ant,
 You must be sadly pinched by want,
 Ever thus to sweat and labour ;
 I have toiled my toil, and now full chase
 Of happiness, I run my race,
 Good morrow, drudging neighbour.”

“ Ah well, farewell Miss Butterfly,
 The sun is up, the fields are dry,
 And I am right strong for labour :
 Mayhap when you have chased your chase,
 And that same happiness embrace,
 You will not neglect your neighbour.

Time was, you know,”—“ Not I, not I,”
 Frisked off the gaily-plumed Fly,
 The brisk Ant plied her labour :
 She sunned her eggs, her corn she nibbled,
 And in dried earth her dry stores dibbled,
 Then looked out for her neighbour.

“ Eh, sirs !—and you have lost a wing ;
 Some wretch has had a wicked fling
 At your delicious labour ;

You have lost your legs in that same chace,
You have lost your horns, and that bonny face
Is dirty, sweetest neighbour :

But you have tasted happiness"—
"Less," cried the dying insect, "less
Reproach me, prudent neighbour ;
You have drudged, and met with sweet content,
I, wearied, wounded, and outspent,
Glittered, but lost my labour ;

"And now I die."—Aye, more is the pity,
The young, the gay, the blithe, the witty,
For happiness thus labour :
Read they my rede, I trow they 'ill find
Real happiness of toil designed
To be the nearest neighbour.

All others are but hey-day cousins,
Acquaintances picked up by dozens,
Straw in the sun that glisters :
Sweet labour and content, scarcely ever
Are known from each other's side to sever
But live like friends and sisters.

THE BEAVERS.

Raired the wind, the tempest gathered,
 Doun the snaw-storm fell, fu'-feathered
 From Walishmen's geese :
 In sooth it was an awfu' day,
 Sic as mote tough-skinned flint-stanes flay
 An' misers fleece.

Flew the leaves, the branches crackled,
 The bushes a' were frizzed an' hackled,
 An' tugged an' twisted :
 A beaver's hut fu' sair was beaten,
 Auld grannie crouched, an' mammie swaten
 Mair nor she listed.

Chafed the flood, the torrent battered,
 The stakes were drawn, the dam was shattered,
 A leak began :
 It was nae time for sleep, they hastened,
 They plashed the breach, the pile they fastened,
 Then in o' doors ran.

Lulled the wind, the rain saft pattered,
 Comfort their easy bosoms flattered,
 An' daddie entered :

Guid man, he grunted wi' delight,
Sair for that hame had been his fright
Where a' his joys centred.

Whined he loud, his cubs were cheerie,
An, frisked, an' leaped, an' unco' merrie,
'Gan to be curious :
“ Why, mammie, did you plash an' plaster,
Wattle, and drive the pile down faster
'Spite o' auld Boreas ? ”

Frowned she, but the storm was over,
Dad shared her out a wisp o' clover
An' greenest braunches ;
Then, spreading out his fish-tail flat,
Recht as a minister, upsate
Upon his haunches.

Preached he lang, the wee-anes listened,
Wi' glee, auld luckie's black eyne glistened,
An' glowered, an' gleamed :
But o' his sang, the fu' gran' close
Was, “ wee-bit griefs will grow into woes
Gin ye allow 'em.

Repress them young, the wark is easie,
Grawn great, they winna say ‘ sae please ye,’
An' haud their breath ;
Nay, bairns, young leak may become auld deluge,
An' ye in vain seek out a refuge
Frac wounds or death.”

Prosie he grew, an' I maun hasten
The leakage o' my pen to fasten,
 'Gainst auld wife's saws :
O' checking anger, staying expense,
Curbing first steps frae innocence,
Crushing the first unhallowed thought
An' mony greater guid's he taught
 Wi' moche applause.

THE DRAKE AND THE GAME-CKOCK.

We lang may hae our way fu' swing,
But find at last the tether-string
 Bring us up short ;
An' gin we strain the cord too much,
It snaps, or wi' a strangling clutch
 Spoils a' our sport.

A game-cock lang, wi' vapouring bluster,
Had i' the hamestead made a fluster,
 An' gran' commotion :

Before him saueie cockerells fled,
Even gobbling turkies booed the head
In pale devotion.

Wi' a raunge like this nae satisfied,
Auld Gaffer Drake maun to his pride,
Bend down in awe ;
The dueklings skirled as loud he crawled,
An', like a dominie's big rod,
Laid down the law.

Gaffer, unused to the hectoring,
Made at his throat a wicked fling,
An' grabbed tight :
The flying feathers sharp he tuzzled,
The weasan-pipe he sairly nuzzled
In angry fight.

In vain he twirks his near-han' spur,
In vain his red-challers threaten war
An' fierce eyne bleeze ;
In vain his flapping pennons rattle,
Far straunger pennons wage their battle
An' his pride deize.

He sued : the baffled tyrant sued,
Choaked wi' vexation, ehoaked wi' bluid
An' dust, an' heat :
“ Keep ye your station,” quo' the drake,
“ I nae wi' ither, mell ne make
Ne drad defeat.

Peacefu' an' calm, an' patient lang,
I rather wud submit to wrang
 Than stir up strife :
But, mark me, e'en frae amang the weak
The indignant spirit may outbreak,
 Nor spare your life."

THE SCORPION AND HIS TORMENTORS.

ARE there not in this spacious globe
Beings, disguised beneath the robe
 Of friendship and of truth ;
Are there not wretches ; are there not
Fiends, whose existence is a blot,
 Fiends lost to holiest ruth ?

Oh, know ye not, for such there are
Whose play-game is malignant war,
 Whose love is bitterest hate :
Know ye not some, whose blood-hound breath
Taints, poisons, weaves in webs of death
 The poor unfortunate,

And smile?—So laughed with hellish glee
Men, at the martyring misery
Of a scorpion thrown into flame :
Yet, ere the tortured suicide
Struck the stern death-blow, aloud he cried,
“On you the sin, the shame,

On you alight the crime ye cause,
On you fall retribution’s laws,
On you be curse and ban ;
Crimeless not I, but ye shall bear
The weight of my sad sepulchre,
Outcast of God and man.”

H O D G E .

That man is never out at sea
Who has a natural buoyancy,
Like cork or feather ;
Nor is he lost, though out of town,
Who can make himself a bed of down
From moss or heather.

He may be never fairy-led
Who has natural glow-worms in his head ;

He who has not,
If in the dark, had better take
The shining grub from the dewy brake
And stiek on his coat.

Not so, thought Hodge, whose upper rooms,
Like nicely-gilded Chinese tombs

Were to let unfurnished :
It were time enough, if he should let them,
To rout the fixtures up and get them
Well cleaned and burnished.

Soaking himself, as he was wont
In the good, old-accustomed haunt,

Stupid as a log :
“ No, that he would not from danger flinch,
What cared he for frog-eating Freneh,
Who cared for fog ?

“ He would not take the offered lantern,
He knew the way, he did n’t want one,
He would n’t have it ;

He knew he was not in a fog,
Or if he were, a free-born dog
Would never slave it.

“ No, he would be neither led nor lighted,
He knew that he was not benighted,”
So, made a start :

Hallooing, he set the wide moor ringing ;
Whistling, and staggering, and singing,
Kept up his heart.

And 'though the mist its blackness blackened,
No, not a whit his pace he slackened,
But right on drove.
Nought could he see a yard around,
Nor stick, nor stake, upon the ground,
Nor star above.

But he was staunch and resolute,
A thorough, headstrong, bull-dog brute,
And as he could not
See through the gloom, " Why, what cared he ?
He was a Briton born, and free,
And see he would not."

Muffling his coat around his head,
Onward the booby blundered
Right manfully :
Nor hesitated, until his sconce
With an old oak tree played at bonce
For mastery.

From the timber trunk, his timber head
Bounded off nimbly, and he fled
Like a marble split :
Twirling round, like a Catherine-wheel,
Heel over head, head over heel
Down a gravel-pit.

Laughing, you call drunken Hodge "a fool;"
Are there no others in the school
 The cap will fit?
Whoever shuts both ears and eyes, sirs,
And listens not to good advisers
 Has little wit:

And, boy or man, whoe'er persists,
And, obstinately mad, resists
 Against tuition;
Will, ere long on life's journey outset,
Find himself in a gravel-pit
 Or in worse condition.

THE EXILE.

TO AN ENGLISH DAISY FOUND IN A FOREIGN LAND.

Lovely flower of islands blest
Melting soft in western light,
Waking in my throbbing breast
Thoughts and dreams of lost delight:
Art thou friend, or art thou foe,
Speakest thou of joy, or woe,

Speakest thou of war, or peace,
Of misery or happiness,
Still will I clasp thee to my heart
For of my father-land thou art.

Loveliest gem of beauty's isle,
Comest thou in wrath to me,
Or, cradled in affection's smile,
Trackedst thou the stormy sea ?
Pledge of love, or threat of hate,
Balmed with health, or barbed with fate,
Laden with curse, or fraught with blessing,
Rejecting me, or still caressing,
Yet will I clasp thee to my heart,
For of my father-land thou art.

Bonniest bloom of nature's wreath,
Tell me good, yet tell me truth :
Breathes the fond paternal breath
That hallowed my earliest youth ;
Breathes a mother's holy sigh
Deep imbued with sympathy ;
Brothers, sisters, do they pray
For the poor exile far away ?
Oh, whisper to my anxious heart
For of my father-land thou art.

Hearest thou?—Oh, answer me,
Did the sainted tear-drop fall ;
Did they in silent ecstasy
To memory's soul my form recal ;

Does thy fairy-cup enfold
Friendship's brightest, purest gold ;
Did the dew that decks thy stem
Fall from chaste love's diadem ?
Oh, whisper to my anxious heart,
For of my father-land thou art.

Thou speakest not. But I will speak,
But I will dream of days gone by ;
Think, 'till my heart with thinking break,
And sigh 'till thought forget to sigh ;
And under the parental roof
I hear the kind, the fond reproof,
I hear the prayer ascend to heaven,
I feel respondent blessings given,
And, crush thee on my bursting heart
For of my father-land thou art.

Blessed flower ; thy look is peace,
Thy meek and maiden modesty,
Rich in its own contentedness,
Bids carking care my dwelling flee :
Oh, I will love, will o'er thee bend,
A fast-sworn, never-swerving friend ;
And as my homeward-seeking sigh
Blends with thy gentle fragrancy,
Still will I press thee to my heart,
For of my father-land thou art.

THE MISANTHROPE.

No,—ask not why my brow is stern,
No,—ask not why my eye is sad.—
Gloom and despair may pass away,
Madness may leave its outworn prey
Pitied and mourned : but I,—yes, I
Am loathed as creation's enemy.

And yet I weep ; and yet I know,
In fancy know each human thrill ;
Know all the charities that twine
Their tendrils round compassion's shrine,
Yet snap them through, and as they die
Writhe in reproachful agony.

And, know you not ? No, never know,
No, never feel this sordid fire.
Poisonous, 'twill gnaw the sinewy form,
Baneful, 'twill beauty's self deform,
And fretting, cankering, withering still,
Brand thee a minister of ill.

Yet, pass me not.—No—not in need
Of help, of pity, shun me thus.

Feel I not all the wounds I give ;
Do I not feared and hated live :
Loved, not by one, by none revered,
By myself hated, loathed, feared ?

No social joy for me has joys,
No grief has griefs that I can share :
Entrenched in self, in drear delight
Consuming day, exhausting night,
Isolatedly alone
I smile, I sigh, I laugh, I groan.

Yet know I not ferocious hate,
Nor know I spite, nor malice know ;
No wish have I around to hurl
Destruction, and in the maddening whirl
Ride riot, and with baleful blast
Wither the joys I cannot taste.

Oh, yes,—my soul can, in her flight,
Paint weeping joys to thaw my heart.
Tears of imaginary woe
The stone can melt.—The ice can flow—
And yet,—and yet I scarcely feel
The real woes of the miserable.

Outstretched in anguish, gnawn by pain,
Pined down by want, a crawling corpse
Vainly implores, entreats in vain.

Close gripes my hand. Not in the vein
For pity, I, unblest, pass by ;
Unblest, yet pitied by charity.

And I can scowl, and I can draw
My heart-strings tight, my blood suppress ;
Compress each generous, struggling tear,
Each hope, each wish, ensepulchre,
And, wrapt in night, and wrapt in gloom,
Live, as I were a living tomb :

A living bane, all hope to blight,
A kill-crop wretch, all joy to mar.—
The mother round her baby flings
Protecting arms, the scared child clings
And screams :—and friends—no friend have I,
No, not with beasts in amity.

Oh, no.—I live, from life exiled,
Inhabiting, not of this world.
Homeless at home ; I nought possess
Possessing all ; drear wretchedness
Is all my joy ; my hope is all
Despair ; my birth, a funeral.

Here, buried—there, futurity
Lights not.—Yes—oh, despite of all
Corroding torments ; there I see
Light marching forth in panoply,
Creating good, destroying ill,
One glad, eternal miracle.

Oh, pray for me!—For you I pray,
 Though bitter are the plaints I breathe;
 Pray this repulsive temper may
 No longer bind me as its prey;
 Oh pray that I, once more, may know
 The endearing sanctities of woe:

Those lovely sanctities, those joys,
 The joys, the fears, of angels born;
 Those pleasures which en-honey mirth,
 Beatitudes which, o'er the hearth
 Circling on flowery pinions, bind
 Man unto man, and kind to kind.

THE BARDIE'S LAMENT

FOR HIS PET CHAFFINCH.

Puir, bonnie birdie! thou art gane
 Scrimpit in flesh, an' bluid, an' bane,
 Unheard thy last, departin' mane
 To lang, lang rest;
 Biggin aneath the moulderin stane
 Thy drearie nest.

Thou wert indeed, a bonnie birdie,
Braw feathers deckit thy sleekit hurdie,
An' nobler presence had na Geordie
 Upon his throne,
Wi' a' his gowd, his trash, his dirdie,
 Scaptre, an' croun.

Bauld was thy brow, an' gleg thine e'e,
Thy skirl wad stay the passer by,
As chatterit on reight gloriously
 Thy cheerfu' sang,
Blithe as thou had' been ever free,
 Nat prisoned lang.

It was nae whimperin, whifflin glaver,
Nae daft, Italian cleishmaclaver,
Nae Colin-hoodie, pipin' ever
 Wi' unco pain,
But true-born Briton, rantin owre
 His jollie strain.

In spite o' pain, in spite o' waes,
Spite o' the glow'r o' feline faes,
Spite o' the sheers that skelpit thy taes,
 An' touchit the marrow,
An' garred thee hirple a' thy days,
 Thou hast kenned na sorrow.

Hartsome an' winsome, fu' o' glee,
Thou perkit thy crest, an glentit thine e'e.

An' lookit, apprehension free,
On the han' that fed thee;
Undreaming 'twas the neif sae slee,
Thus evil sped thee.

But, birdie! 'twas na meant for ill;
Nae bad intent, nae wicked will,
But sheer unlawfu' want o' skill
Did thee the wrang,
An' garred my vera heart-bluid thrill
Like thine ain sang.

But thou forgie'd it, an' I made,
In sma' amend for the rude raid,
An easie perch, an' cosie bed,
An nursit thee weel,
An'ance I howkit thee frae the deid
Wi' warier skill.

An' ance, an' ever we were friends,
Sic as the warl' na aften finds,
Ane in our hearts, an' ane our minds;
Thou o'er thy game
Crackin content, an I wi' pains,
'Hovin thy wame.

'Hech, birdie! spite o' a' thy ills,
Thou had nae bodin grief that kills,
Waur than a' blisters, draps, an pills,
An' sic like trash;

Whiles routh an' stouth thy crawie filled
Thou had need na fash.

But man, puir man, may drudge an' toil,
Vapour, an' swagger for a while,
May spen' himsel in the turmoil
For fame an' wealth,
Glad to escape the sufferin coil
Wi loss o' health.

Wi' loss o' health, wi' loss o' gear,
The hard, hard toil o' mony a year,
Loss o' each guid the warl' haud's dear,
An' waur than a'
Wi'out a friend to drap a tear,
O'er his cauld clay.

While thou——nay, birdie! thou maun dee
To live na mair:—but man may be,
Gin he tak tent o' Christian'ty
A spirit fair,
An, deeing ance, may rise wi' glee,
To dee na mair.

ON, ISRAEL!

Rise, in your faith, O Israel, rise !
 Gird, gird your armour on ;
 O'er mountain, forest, vale, heath, plain,
 O'er Ocean journey on.

Pour from the wave-encircled south,
 Pour from the ice-bound north ;
 Pour from the east, pour from the west,
 Pour, pour your children forth.

From Albion's cliff, Columbia's wild,
 From Erin and from Gaul ;
 From Gades to Moscovia,
 Your standard summons all.

From Elam, Parthia, Media,
 From China's teeming land ;
 From Gambia's blazing sands of gold,
 From Egypt's fertile strand :

On, on, on, on : not in your might,
 Not in your mortal pride ;
 But in the strength of Him, who lives,
 And yet was crucified.

Humble and meek, yet firm, yet fierce
Against the deadly foe ;
Who, wielding sin, and hell, and death,
Once laid your leader low :

But yet had scarcely viewed the deed,
Scarce heard the parting breath,
Ere chains of ever-living fire
Bound him, sin, hell, and death,

Indissolubly bound.—On, on, on, on,
On from each servile band ;
On with your gems, on with your gold,
On to your father-land,

On, on ; and when ye kiss the soil
Which your forefathers trod,
In strains of deathless gratitude,
Bless your forefathers' God.

Bless Him, who through the Coral-Sea
Led Israel's wanderers forth ;
Bless Him, who Israel's glorious host,
Draws from the frozen north.

Bless Him from Sharon's roseate vale,
Bless Him from Aijalon ;
Bless Him from Carmel's flowery top,
Bless Him from Lebanon.

And as ye bless Him, from your hills,
Pour on the darkling earth,
That light, that life, that joy, that love,
Which leads your legions forth.

'Till every land and every tongue
Shall your blest chorus swell;
And heaven to earth, and earth to heaven,
The gladdening story tell.

PRAYER.

Say, what is prayer, and whence shall prayer
In meetest guise ascend to heaven;—
By sculptured fanes, by cloisters fair,
Is strength to supplication given?

Does solitude to prayer incite,
Or cherish crowds the holy fire;
Illumes it with the altar's light,
Responds it to the sounding lyre?

Can brilliant day, can nightly gloom,
Can twilight in her misty pall ;
Or, can the solitary tomb
The yew-tree shade, the ivied wall,

The ruins where our fathers lie,
The caves where saintly martyrs rest ;
Raise into sacred energy
The slumbering of the sordid breast ?

In fear, in anguish, in despair,
Prayer may ascend with bitterest shriek ;
As, slumbering caught within their lair,
Yells may from slaughtered lions break.

In pining hope, in misery,
Earnest and frequent prayer may rise ;
But oh, the Christian loves to see,
The uninterested sacrifice.

And loves, abstracted if alone,
Abstracted though in thronged fanes,
Mentally prostrate at the throne
Of mercy, to pour out its strains.

Secret from all, but Him, whose ear,
Whose eye, whose love, which never sleep ;
Read in the penitential tear,
Praises which contrite creatures weep.

Yes—that is praise and that is prayer,
Though eye, nor lip, nor gleam, nor move,
Which, upward on their pinions bear,
Revering duty, fervent love.

And that the place whence prayer should rise,
Where holiest thoughts the soul prepare ;
Altars make not the sacrifice,
Nor time, nor place, the Christian prayer.

CONTRITION.

From dreariest depths of misery,
From vales of deepest woe ;
In anguish wails my bitter cry,
In terror heave's my throe.

Oh mighty, dreadful, terrible,
Justly incensed God ;
Oh look in mercy on the worm
That writhes beneath thy rod.

My guilt, my weariness, my woe,
Lie prostrate at thy throne ;
Worthless and wretched, outcast, lost,
My sinfulness I own.

I plead, in tears of blood I plead,
I, deeply shuddering cry,
Guilty ! oh, guilty ! guilty still !
My guilt will never die :

But deadlier, deadlier, deadlier still,
Will be my misery ;
More dreadful, and more dreadful still,
My torturing agony.

There is no hope, no trembling hope,
No hope to be forgiven ;
None in the deep, none in the earth,
No—none in highest heaven.

None, none—but One—and for his grace,
I dare not, dare not plead ;
Who can for me, for that blest hope,
Dare yet to intercede.

Not one, not one :—of all that lured,
Of all that cheered me on ;
None can, for me, for pardon plead,
Not one, not one, not one.

Not one.—There is but only one,
And Him I dare not see ;
He came from heaven to die for man,
But could not die for me.

For crime on crime, still bear me down,
Still plunge me deeper still ;
Strong as His mercy, strong His love,
My crimes are stronger still.

And, though His all-atoning blood
Could cleanse the encrimsoned sea ;
It could not, could not hide my crimes,
It could not flow for me.

And, could His ever-yearning love
Place me on heaven's pure throne ;
My guilt would snatch my withering soul,
And hurl me, headlong, down.

I am the only, only one,
That cannot be forgiven ;
All may be pardoned, all be saved,
All, all may enter heaven,

But me.—Yet could I, could I pray,
He might in mercy deign
To hear—'tis said, the vilest wretch,
Never implores in vain.

But I am so, so deadly vile,
Without, around, within,
My penitence would stream with guilt,
My prayer would shriek with sin.

I shriek, I shriek.—Oh, pardon me,
Save, save, oh, save my soul :
Cleanse, cleanse my fearful guiltiness,
Make, make, oh make me whole,

Make, make me pray—Oh, by thy blood,
Which flow'd on Calvary ;
By thy dread, last, expiring groan,
And, by thine agony,

Hear, hear, oh, hear ! a suppliant wretch ;
Heed, heed my piteous cry :
Look down in mercy, on my soul,
Save, save thine enemy,

Save, save me.—————

A HYMN.

SOUL of the world, dread source of light,
 In all perfection infinite ;
 Creation's all-pervading sense ;
 Pure, self-sustained intelligence !
 The teeming earth, heaven's glorious host,
 Moons, suns, and stars, in radiance lost ;
 In glowing concert, as they roll,
 Hail Thee, The Universal Soul.

The intensely clear, the tranquil sky,
 Broad ocean's calm immensity,
 Motionless air, the roseate breath
 Of flood, of fell, of mead, of heath ;
 Earth wide outspread, her thousand hills,
 Her thousand vales, her thousand rills,
 Instinct with Thee, in glad accord
 Hail Thee, The Universal Lord.

And day, and night, the dazzling blaze
 Of fervid noon, the placid gaze
 Of midnight deep, blithe summer's heat,
 Stark winter's cold, the arrowy sleet,
 The still-descending, genial rain,
 The dew-reek from the laughing plain ;
 All, all, rejoicing in their birth,
 Hail Thee, The Lord of heaven and earth.

And every tribe of every form,
That glide the lake, or ride the storm,
That thread the caverns of the deep,
Or climb the wild mount's splintered steep,
In ceaseless stream that cloud the sky,
Or, darkling in the dank fen lie ;
All, all that creep, all, all that soar,
Thee, The Creator-Lord adore.

All, in exuberant songs of mirth,
Swell the glad praises of the earth ;
All, in rich floods of melody,
Swell the glad praises of the sky ;
All, in exulting, rapturous strain
Swell the glad praises of the main :
By Thy whole universe adored
Thou art, The only God and Lord.

BIRTH,
DEATH,
RETRIBUTION.

A Series of Sketches,

IN VERSE.



BIRTH.

THE MOTHER'S SONG.

HARD by the gate of death I swooned,
The glazing film suffused mine eye ;
As outworn by one leprous wound
Scarce could I raise my piteous cry.

But Thou didst hear that piteous moan,
But Thou didst stoop my soul to free ;
The grave re-echoed, as my groan
Swelled to a shout of victory.

Oh, thou, that didst in mercy hear
Still, still secure me from all ill ;
Teach me thy holy name to fear,
Teach me to love thy holy will :

And, teach me in thy narrowest path
To train this dear, this first-born child ;
To bid her, in the day of wrath,
Plead, and to thee be reconciled.

Baby, thou sleepest void of fear :
So sleep, so live, so die, secure
Heaven has for thee a pardoning tear,
And heaven's redeeming love is sure.

Dwelling upon each tone,
As though each tone struck on some sister key ;
In gentlest play, informing but not marring
The angelic features, sympathy, commiseration,
Hope, and all else of endearing import, mark
The ministering spirits ; each from each
Varying as vary roses of one stem,
Equally beauteous, fragrant equally, as watching,
Guarding, supporting, and with kindest aid
Whispering resignation, they surround
A sister of earthly elements.

They watch
In guardianship, and, where they watch,
Afar off in loathsomest conclave, fiends, in the foulest
Concord of hatred, their discordant forms
Roll back compulsively, while lips of earth
Vibrate with notes of heaven.

Pausing,

As when some lovely modulation melts,
And mingles with young evening's balmy breath
Its richest intonation, spell-bound, the ear
Entrances up the senses, and we sit
Breathless, lest breathing unjoy us, the blest watchers
Hang silent :—then, in rapturous ecstasy
The full chord strike :

HYMN OF THE MINISTERING SPIRITS.

“ Glory !

Glory. Hear ye ! hail the sound.
Glory. Earth and heaven are bound
Once more. Once more the blest ethereal fire
Breathes from heaven to inspire
The barren clod. The senseless clay
Wakes to creation's bounteous day.

Glorious, wondrous. Deity
Manifests himself in thee,
Piteous, helpless, wailing child.
'Though not less in insect swarms,
'Though not more in angel forms,
'Though not more in worlds that sail,
Curving through night's dusky veil ;
'Though not more in systems, sweeping
Dim in distance, almost sleeping,

As they, exanimate in awe,
Infinitude arising saw
From nothing :—yet in thee, more mildly,
More mercifully, more lovingly,
Frail germ of immortality,
Glow the life-giving Deity.
Glory ! ”

Under mild southern skies,
At vintage even, rises on the breeze
A sacred vesper-hymn. Aërial twilight spreads
Its deep, subduing softness, o’er the calm,
Clear, silver-bosomed streamlet : until the senses
Lulled in voluptuous sweetness, sink in peaceful
Undreading slumber.

Fierce, licentious eyes
Glare from the gloomy ravine. The dark Corsair
Shrieks his bewildering cry, as intercepting chasms
Forbid the concerted swoop. The startled peasants
In their security, with wonder gaze
As the torch-gleams, illumining horrid brows
Paint man in his demon form, and in instinctive dread
Close trembling around their offspring : so closer draw
The ministering spirits as the fiends
Raise their insulting taunt.

THE TAUNT OF THE DEMONS.

“Horror!—ha, ha!—Derision and scorn,
Why mock ye thus at the brat newly born?
Why mock we thus? Mock they not their chief
With flatteries belying their firm belief?

Ha, ha,—ha, ha!—Think ye that the song,
And the silvery lisp of an angel’s tongue
Keep us aloof? In their leashes restraining,
Blood-hounds and vampires backward reining,
We poison their fangs, as they champ and chew,
And yelp, and change their putrescent hue.

Why poison we, why barb we their teeth;
Why tinge we, why taint we their pestiferous breath?
Why? but to gibe, and to jeer, and to laugh,
While, wallowing in blood, they the life-blood quaff.

Ha-ha, ha-ha! How ye crouch and quail,
And fan off with your pennons the life-tainting gale.
Chary be ye of the breathing clay:
We snuff the quarry, we scent the prey,
And, eager as death, and relentless as fate,
Swoop we, and tear we the wretches we hate.

As we riot, and revel, and scream with delight ;
Retreating, and cowering, and withering with fright,
Pray ye, and wail ye, while we in full cry,
Mangle your charge, and the limbs toss on high.

Aye, smile ye ! restrained, as ye know, is our rage,
That driveller's love shall grow colder with age,
And the prayer which now haloes the child of his soul,
Those prayers which inveterate diseases controul,
Shall faint and shall fail, and the hope and the faith
Die in distrust, and unshackle grim death :

And we shall exult as vice stains her deeper,
As pleasures unhallowed in infamy steep her ;
As, marred in its blossom, as cankered and gnawn,
The angel soul dies—in the devil new-born :

So guard ye your charge.”

In aspiration fervent, lowly bending,
Humbled in dust, as in the awful presence
Of Him, whose infinite essences pervade
His works, stupendous works ! surpassing far more
Man's labours, than the flesh-shrined intellect,
(Which confines, almost diving into the blaze
Of heaven's effulgence, and from the holiest fountain
Drinketh in wisdom, until the expansive scene
Of his Creator's works lies stretched around
As Europe beneath Etna, and the vile reptile
Almost becomes as a god) surpasses blank

And chilling nothingness :—with arms outstretched,
And eyes, which fain would, although in humility
They dare not look toward heaven ; while pure tears
Of overflowing gratitude and love
Well from the heart's inmost sources, adoringly
The father's prayer arises.

THE FATHER'S PRAYER.

“ Oh, thou great,
Dread, dread, Creator ! How have I deserved
Weak, worthless, vile, abased as I am
This increase of blessing ? Could I thank thee more
Than tears, and trembling yet aspiring love
Can thank, more were too meanly despicable
But that thou stoolest and from the peasant hand
Acceptest the obscurest flower.—At thy feet
I thank, I bless, I praise.—O thou, my Maker !
So pour thine influence, so imbue her soul,
That growing, she may, like thee when on earth,
In stature so in spiritual increase, live
Amid this darkness, an immingled ray
Of virtues brightest and dearest. Upon her head
Pour blessings. Bid ministering spirits guard
Her tottering steps. Be thou, be thou, O Father !
Through this wayfaring life, her helm, her shield :
Whatever ill, whatever misery may,

In thy best wisdom, purify her from
Earth's thralldom ; oh, do thou her footsteps guide,
Still bear her harmless, still the tempter stay,
Still lead her onward, until from the dizzy verge
Of utmost earth, across death's blank abyss
The purest exhalation e'er that ascended
In burning incense, Thee only excepted, wing
Its joyous flight."

And, joyously around
Spirits of awful form, as age on age,
Had goodliest lines of noblest ancestry
Star-crowned poured forth ; intently listening,
Dwell on the suppliant accents : then, in unison
Lowly resounding, as from some cloistered fane
Vigil or orison, in holiest strain
Ascendeth with the mellowing murmur mingled
Of distant rushing water ; pray they not
Riches, or rank, or beauty, or endowment
Of highest intellect ; but, giving life
To wishes, which but rising in the mind,
Unuttered but in thought, the parent's soul
Still spell-bound hold : prophetic of good
Implore they Christian virtues, amplest power
Beneficence to wish, to will, to effect ;
That, blest in the contemplation, earth and heaven
Harmoniously rejoicing, they and theirs,
Mutually enlightening, mutually excelling
Each other in perfection's varied forms,
May, fondly looking through the splendid void

Of by-gone ages, illumined brilliantly
As a sea of star-light, trace, still wondering trace
Their devious trackways, until, with bliss o'erpowered
And rapturous gratitude, dissolving, as if they died
Into the Eternal's splendour, in holiest hymns
Unutterably, incommunicably rich
In treasures of beatific vision, they
Ever may dwell upon, ever may celebrate
This natal hour.

And, as their prayer subsides,
That blest Archangel, he who first perceives
And human life incipient nourishes
Until the day-spring greets it; yielding up his charge,
The ministering spirits, bids rejoice
In this, of the Creator's power another instance,
Of his pervading care another pledge.

THE ANGEL OF LIFE.

"As never failed them day, and sister night
Yet never left them by her balms unsoothed;
So never yet has failed, nor yet shall fail
Until the grand consummation of the proof
Of His hatred and His love; one equal line
Of beings accountable, perpetuated
By secondary causes, yet eloquently
Bearing the impress of perpetuated

Creation.—In this weak, puny flesh,
In this poor being, helpless and ignorant,
The breath of God, an immortal principle
Has given life to, whose irradiations
May, in the wisdom of the dread First Cause,
Illuminate, and beautify, and embellish,
Of this terrestrial scene, the social joys,
And, ultimately, sisters, the new-born angel,
As now the new-born mortal, we may greet
And chorus its acclamations.”

THE CHARGE TO THE GUARDIAN-ANGEL.

“ Sister, thou
Hast nourished, and to its perfected expansion watched
Of human mold an amaranthine flower
And needest another ward.—Around her head
Here watch, and diligently, as thou knowest
Diligence how needful. Pour into her soul
Divinest consolation. As the germ
Of intellect awakening, spreads its fibres
As a tree its roots, nourishment seeking out,
Be wary, lest the marrer of our toil
Secretly taint the well-spring. As you may,
Not urging, not compelling, for the human soul
Accountable for action must be free
Action to purpose or effect, far off
Drive sedulously those who lurk around

Externally to tempt, or by vile imagery
To impure the purest, most exalted, most
Ennobling of human virtues. Evil, they
Love evil, and, ever envious, ever strive
Him to assail, who but thus suffers them
His goodness, his perfection, his surpassing
Perfection to evince."

So charged, so sits
Watching the Guardian Angel; and around
A circlet of attendant spirits bend
In yearning love; and, woven into sounds,
As insect murmurings rise upon the fragrance
Of morning's incense-tribute, harmoniously
The angel caution, and, responsively,
The angel entreaty arise.

THE RECORDING ANGELS.

"Watchful be thou, sister spirit,
Slumber not upon thy guard;
Evil may thy charge inherit
Shouldst thou fail in watch and ward."

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL.

"Vigilant, unslumbering,
Anxiously my charge I tend.

Ye, who virtues numbering
Eagerly to heaven ascend,
Bearing elate the record true :
Should ye in your voyage see
Any impending enemy,
Kindly give me caution due."

THE ATTENDANT SPIRITS.

" Fear they not, but pure affection
Bids the wish in sounds o'erflow ;
Vigilance and circumspection
Need we ; stealthy is the foe."

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL.

" Mortal mansions circuiting,
Anxious ever to defend ;
As ye ply the agile wing
See ye aught that can offend,
Palsying dew, exciting air,
With demoniac malice fraught,
To fever or to enerve the thought,
Warn me of the subtle snare."

THE ATTENDANT SPIRITS.

“ Fear thou not ; nor time, nor distance
Check the ever-ready aid ;
Wish thou, and the wished assistance
Waves its sword-fire round thy head.”

Fixedly,

As in resolve not firmly yet resolved,
Eying the longed-for prey, as eyes some poor
Bewildered, lone, assistanceless traveller
Wrecked on untrodden shores, a tigress fell
By her whelps dry-drawn : so rabid, and so fell
Of purpose, lured from his midnight prowl
By the snarling, jackall clamour, the Wan-fiend,
Dark in his purposes (although scotched, and blasted
To ignominy and exile, still superiorly
Above his fellows rising, as pillared flame
Shoots up in awful volume, through ember-charged
Mephitic volcano smoke) upon one knee
Resting his pennoned arms, and pressing hard
With clenched hands, the close-set, arching lips,
Straineth his eye-balls, whose malignant fires
Wander like storm-lapped suns, as though their glare
Snake-like, could draw, forth of her dim recess,
Futurity, and mark, as marks some chieftain

In the lengthened legions of an opposing army
 Wherethrough to dash, and on his keen sword's edge
 Balance mercy or slaughter.— Changing in hue
 With rising passions, as contending fires
 Hue-vary melting metals, his huge form
 Heaves.— Unable to resolve
 Flag down his thought-strained features, and a smile
 Emphatically contemptuous, up-draws
 The thick, expressive lip.

“ Nurse, nurse, he cries,
 Tend as ye will the despicable wretch,
 Fan as he will my hungry harpies off,
 Deep in the citadel, as pest and plague
 Engender amid filth, corrupting passions
 Their venomous rot-web spreading, despite of ye
 Shall heat, shall seethe her blood : and,—yes, while ye
 Unpowered by human wickedness, hold back
 Weeping not striving ; shall, impetuously rushing
 As the wild war-whoop rushes, hornet legions
 Banquet upon your hive.—Weak, flimsy toys,
 Pranked bubbles, floating in a colouring sun,
 And bursting as he warms ye : wring it's neck,
 And as ye wring it, decorously whine
 A requiem.— Vile, this world
 Us needs not to defile it, nor to increase
 Evils, which springing as from corruption spring
 Infectious foetid mosses, poison all
 The easily-tainted labour.—But, revenge,
 Dear, dear revenge for injury unmerited

Onward impels.—Yes, yes, we will avenge us
And through his creature's sides, with goring wounds
Trench in his heart deep scars.—Our place to fill
By another, and a better race strives he ;
But, lest the loved work melt beneath his fingers
Flaws it by sinful fires ; or, if it escape
The trial, in his jewel cabinet
Uptreasures ringing-vessels, which, as his breath
Strikes them, must echo flatteries.—Think ye not
I envy this. His empty stalls behold
Like coffers of their dignifying treasures
Rudely despoiled, and clamorously upbraiding
The silly spendthrift ; and, your shame-stricken eyes
Feast on the fervid gems, deep-set in rich
Resplendent caskets, whose all-piercing blaze
Enriching the wide dominion, in whose bowels
He fondly thought to immure us, far out-peer
In real worth, his vapour-wreathed shrines
And independent greatness. His, as a void
Stall-carven choir ; and mine, as a glorious conclave
Of scarlet-coped cardinals.”

So sneers

The vaunting, yet shuddering spirit.

Answering not

Rest upon angel weapons, the angels pure
Marking his downward flight.

THE HYMN OF THE GUARDIAN SPIRITS.

“ Yes, we trust thee : yes, we praise thee ;
Yes, we bless thee : yes, we adore thee,—
Thou art ever, ever near us,
Ever do we stand before thee,
Viewing, wondering as we view
Thy virtue, searching nature through
Producing, cherishing, impelling,
All created worth excelling ;
Powerful,—as its power, to Thee
Were, veriest inanity :
Wise, —— as its wisdom were, to Thee
Dreariest fatuity :
Good, —— as its goodness were, to Thee
Bitterest malignity.”

DEATH.

YES,—where is now that visionary form
 Blithe as the earliest dream of striplinghood,
 When fancy paints the senses, and the iris-wings of
 hope,
 Fanning love's infancy in faëry bowers,
 The ingenuous mind imbue?—Yes—where sink now
 Eyes that once swam in rapture? where sleep now
 Tones, at whose magical influence wrath stood still:
 Footsteps, whose tip-toe eagerness, fell on the ear
 As dew upon drooping violets: ready hands
 Upstaying the aching head of wretchedness:
 Thoughts which could intonate with thoughts, and,
 silently
 Reading the tearful wishes; sympathetically
 Assuring their fulfilment, cheer with consolation
 The desolate spirit?—Lies she there
 Outworn, exhausted; living as though death
 Held mockery at life?—Alas, alas!

Oh, what avails unspotted innocence ?
Oh, what avail fair virtues, deep-enshrined
As water in the palm-leaf, to refresh the traveller
And yield self-nourishment ? Oh, what avail
Perfections whose evanescent perfectness
Leaves us but more to mourn for ?

There, alas,

Rich in the fellowship of misery ;
Tended by piteous faces, wept by eyes
Which glitter in their repressed tribute ; whispered to
By tongues which pause in their condolence ; loving
and loved
Though the dissolving moments, slowly flowing
As oil through rose leaves, softly insidious steal
The fragrance they envelop.—Holily beautiful,
Serene in her endurance, placidly
Smiling, as infants smile upon the breast
Which feeds them : in the arms reposing
And cradled upon affection's throbbing bosom,
The dying Christian, listens as heaven's silver sounds
Blend with earth's moan of sorrow.

Rooted stands

Looking, yet looking not ; regarding, yet thinking not
Of aught, save how, triumphant from the scene
Of his sinking sister's death-bed, he may vaunt
Amid lewd companions his superiority
To nature, and nature's, custom-taught, impressions,
The Unbeliever :—offering to the world
Contemptuous sneers at the holy offices

Wherein, mingling in one spirit, hallowed lips
The hallowed effusion breathing, taste, in faith,
Joys which reality in other worlds
To heighten may lack power.

Hopes, against hope,
Their mother, bending in the weight of years,
Less than in weight of anxiety, the sad picture
In its unpictured eloquence, may pierce through
The fatal slumbering of conscience, and from that rock
Tear forth the living fountain.

Fearing most,
As most to lose possessing, of her youth
The husband and the friend :—and, friends endeared
By reciprocal affection, silently
Watch, as the sailor watches, of his bourne
The fading beacon-light.

Nor less intently,
Nor less in interest, nor less in love ;
Reclining over her pillow, communicating peace,
And gently through the closing mists disclosing
Glimpses of forms unearthly, as the soul
Flutters upon life's confine, neither of earth
Nor heaven ; upward her flight to wing
Longing yet fearing : the attendant spirits.

And, poised upon wings of ether, not in terrific,
Appalling semblance, but so clad, as joy

And light were soul and body, he, at whose lightest
touch

Throw back their welcoming valves the gates of light ;
Or, on harsh hinges grating, smoke inwhelmed,
Stand gaping the gates of death, and in their greedy
gorge

Shrieks aloud hell's threshold :—tenderly assays
His subtlest, least-painful, shaft : and, him entreatingly
The Guardian Angel addresses :

“ Oh, not in wrath,
Not in extremity of anger glare
As thou art wont, when Murder, with fell scowl,
Striding athwart his victim, in a moment
Fear-stricken, hears vengeance, clamorously shrill,
Rend midnight's veil, and demons howling rush
To the nauseous surfeit : Oh, though all must shudder
At thy momentous summons, even though thy voice
But echo their aspiration ; yet, if there be,
In kindest greeting one more kindly accent,
As nard or balm, oh, melt it from thy lip.”

And, with authority
Tempering his mildness, as of rank superior
In the heavenly hierarchy, to the Guardian Spirit,
Replies the Releasing Angel.

“ Yet would I assume
Terrors surpassing all mortal dread ever moulded
From misty twilight : did I on the warring winds

As a desolator riding, peal through the sounding surge
The death-knell ; or enwrap with livid flame
Sweeping in the storm-rack, shake my baleful tresses :
Or, their restraint uncurbing, pour around
These, who, with torture gnashing, champ their fangs
In detestation : this refined spirit
Would, as pure air imprisoned in a loathsome
Stagnated pool, rise through the clinging elements
In scorn towards its native region. Thus exhausted,
Wearied, and to its last hold driven home
By suffering, and keenest anxiety,
Small were the pain attendant upon separation
From the mortal slough ; even though, apparently
To mortal senses, rending agony,
And shrinking tremor, speak as if the grave
Were, to the Christian terrible. For, know they not
These fearful shudderings, may be but as the struggling
Of the gay-fly from its coffin, to upwing
Its voyage ; while before it, endless light,
Me, floating in its radiance, such as thee,
And myriads of ministering spirits waving around
Their orient-coloured plumage, redolent
Of joy and rapture, hail me, not as Death,
But as of Eden's bliss the harbinger."

THE LAST TEMPTATION.

“Despair, despair!”

Crouching in sleight within the tangling tresses,
Watching the momentary respite of the Spirit's
Attentive guardianship, in portentous tone
Mutters the arch-fiend. In such extremity
No common spirit of liminary powers
And more limited malignancy, dare essay
The angel-phalanx to elude.

Inaudibly murmuring,
The dying mortal, feebly lifting up
Hands, once firm-clasped in fervour, in weakness]
 strives
To entreat.

THE BELIEVER.

“ Oh, merciful,
Often deserted Maker, oh, have mercy.”

SATAN.

“Trust thou not
In this last hour Timely warning hadst thou
Yet lackest oil: There are no merchants here.”

THE BELIEVER.

“Faintly I strove, too erringly I walked
Wavering in thy footpath. Oh, have mercy!
’Though worthless, yet I dare his blood to plead
Who died”——

SATAN.

“And that blood stains thee fouler still
In its rejected atonement.”

THE BELIEVER.

“Oh, I call on Thee;—
Oh, as on earth, the participated blood
And body of my Redeemer, to my faith
Gave increase of faith, so, in thy heavenly rest,
Give, give me food, and cleanse my parched lip.”

SATAN.

“And can the crumbled corn and staining juice
Blanch crimes which would empurple the wide sea?
Uttermost ruin hangs upon the fond,
Deceitful superstition.—To a hair
You clung, and the hair has snapt.”

THE BELIEVER.

“Impure, impure,
Loathsomely leprous:—Oh, avoid me all
Ye who love God:—behold me here, and scorn
The victim of his vengeance:—Oh, avoid me.”

Laughing with satisfaction, as the thick
Throe choaks the utterance, the pallid fiend
Gloats on his hoped-for prey.

Trembling

With agonizing fear, intensely straining
Their burning eyeballs, around the death-scene hang
With clenched hands, in awe-stricken commiseration
The miserable comforters.

Her eyes

Starting with incipient convulsion, frenziedly
Beseech for pity, as the quick-catching lip
Falls utteranceless.

“ Satan ! ”—

And as the look

Of beautiful indignation scars his cheek,
Threatening, the foul fiend flees, and the Guardian
Spirit
Cheers her last hope.

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL.

“ In mercy, not in wrath,”

With gentlest breathing, bending as her hands
Wave off the clouding films ; “ oh, not in wrath
Looks down thy Maker upon his erring child.”

And, as a bent flag, from some turbid stream
Is by a playful light-wind’s breath upraised
To assume strength’s mimic semblance, rallying,
Hope’s ebbing spirits flow back.

THE BELIEVER.

“Gloriously Merciful :

Even in indignation merciful ;
Oh, from this depth of misery, hear my languishing
Pour in my spirit thy subduing Spirit :—
Worthless, except in thine imputed worth,
Save, save me.”

And the peace-answering voice of Heaven,
Manifest in the hectic, fluttering, flush,
And the quickened eyeball gleaming unearthily,
And the close-gripping of the bony hands,
The outstretching of the limbs, and stillest stillness
Of the almost rigid features, lighted up
By expectation’s glow ; holily significant
Of assurance re-assured, a correspondent
Saint-glow light up in each regarding eye,
Save his, in whose rank ear an insidious fiend
Whispers of riot and debauchery ;
Whispers of chains snapped off, of passions unthralled,
And the full swing of pleasure, unrebuked
By a sister’s weeping eye.

In the calm pause,

As a fervid sun-beam raises on its stem
A flower from the seed’s corruption, winningly gentle,
And in his features calling up fair smiles,
The Releasing Angel, lightly as Eden’s zephyrs
Fan angel wings, the nascent spirit summons.—

In the perilous moment, pouring from her eyes

The life-wish of her heart; upon those eyes
 Whose scorn had mocked her entreaties, the Christian
 An earnest, a mournful gaze. [fixes

Nor word escapes,
 Nor movement of the lip, but gleams one glance
 As it had said, "presentient of its uselessness
 I warn you yet once more,"

Then, beaming all
 The affections of her soul, concentrated
 In one, departing farewell, gratefully
 Her dear friends' kindness repaying: once reposing
 Upon her widowed mother, who, outstretched,
 Over her feet kneels sobbing; upon her head
 Once begging benedictions, the love-filled gaze
 Rivets itself upon her soul of soul
 Thankfully, as he raises their infant child.

Playfully unsuspecting of his loss,
 Pleased with the novelty, he pats her cheek
 And smiles on his father; then, nestling as he would
 nestle

Eternally on the face he loves, one dying kiss,
 The last act of a mother, closes up
 The Christian mother's life.

No sound is heard.—
 As in that first-born, universal stillness,
 Unbroken by human foot, when, in the desert,
 The Man of God, in visible glory saw
 The type of God, they feel that such a scene
 Is holy ground.

But, in the ambient air,
Arising from her labour, virtuously
Rejoicing in the triumph, the Guardian Angel
Lifts her rejoicing stature, and pours forth
Her strain of gratitude.

HYMN OF THE GUARDIAN ANGEL.

“Supreme, above

All heavens, all worlds; in thine immensity
All-perfect, ever-blessed; gloriously holy:
In holiness, in glory, in thy perfections
Ever infinite; nought couldst thou need to increase
Thine endless sum of happiness:—yet, didst thou call
Into light and being, heavenly hierarchies
Of purely spiritual intelligence:
Didst wide outspread, in thy beneficence,
Orb upon orb, and ever limitless
In power as in mercy, dost sustain
All thine unbounded creation. This wild, bleak,
This cheerless earth, beneath thy glowing smile
Teemed into life exuberant. Man, of the dust
Twin-brother, drew from thee his living soul;
And although he fell from his fealty, although he
Ungrateful, indefensible, blasted by sin
One of thy fairest works, and spiritual death,
A dense, black mist, a putrefying fen
Of present wretchedness, of future woe,

Marred thine own image, and the dullest brute
 Moved lordlier than his self-dethroned lord :
 Yet didst thou, in thy mercy, promise him
 Redemption; and, in thy plenitude of love, didst stoop,
 Mysteriously beyond thy creature's thought,
 As man to live, as man to suffer death,
 From sin, from death, the never-dying death
 Man to redeem.—Here, on thy foot-stool earth,
 I view thine image, by thee perfected ;
 And, perfect in my love and gratitude,
 Adore thee in thy mercy.—Oh, mayest thou
 Thus ever bless thy servant in her duty
 And ever save the souls she has to tend.—
 Alpha, Omega ; origin and end,
 Substance and sum of all that created mind
 Can, in sublimest musing, dimly conceive
 Of infinite perfection, deign to accept
 Thy lowliest creature's ardent gratitude.—

Earth, Earth, O Earth !

Moon, and ye dazzling planets that wheel round
 Your mystic orbits : thou, far-blazing sun :
 Ye stars that in your innate ardour glow :
 Swell, swell my song !

Patriarchs, and kings,
 Priests, prophets, seers : ye ministering Spirits,
 Angel, Archangel, Cherub, Seraphim,
 Bathed in the rapturous flood of harmony
 Swell, swell my song !

High, holy, just,
 And merciful, and righteous ; mighty to save ;
 The dread Lord God of heaven's effulgent hosts

Bowed down his holy head :
In his own son,
His own, exalted, his beloved son,
He laid his glory down ;
He left his kingly throne ;
He stabled among men ;
He bare man's life
In meagre poverty ;
And, Lord of all,
Had not wherewith to pillow
His weary head :
He bare taunts, scoffs,
Despite, and contumely ;
And, perfect in purity,
Died as a malefactor.
Upon the cross
He poured his righteous soul :
Upon the cross
He expiated sin,
And to himself
Himself he reconciled.
In his own creature's form,
In sorrow, grief, and shame, and ignominy,
He trampled on
The power of sin :
He from the brow
Of the arch-apostate tare his burning crown,
Spurned down his principalities and powers,
And from the grave,
The lone, dark, drear, the dismal, silent grave,
He rose a mighty conqueror, and dragged

Sin, Death, and Hell
In triumph.

Then, then we sang,
And all the Morning-Stars,
And all heaven's hosts
Rang with our jubilee.
Then, then we sang,
As now—when saved from Sin,
As now—when saved from Death,
As now—when saved from Hell,
We see arise
A sainted sister from her agony,
Cleansed, purified, redeemed,
And sanctified,
And made,
Glorious, as God's own light,
Holy, as God's own love :

God, is all light,
God, is all love."

"Yes, God is light, and love, and holiness,
All might, all wisdom ; and, surpassing all,
Could any one perfection overpass
Another, God is all mercy and beneficence :
Witness this our dear sister."

And all space
Is filled with choiring spirits to rejoice with
The soul, for heaven secured.

Slinking, as slink
Disappointed tigers, gnawing their lips for pain
And rancorous despite, the malignant fiends
Envy, yet still admire. Homage they pay
Perforce, and, revolting against the admission, still
cry, perforce,
“How beautiful is virtue!”

The gladdened angel,
Breathing out holiness, and looking love,
As mothers look on their firstborn, bids her charge
Ascend to awaiting Heaven.

In delight,
And radiant rapture, and exulting triumph,
Attendant spirits spread their upward wings,
And the Released Spirit, in her ascent
Speaks her impressions.

“And I yet live.—The agonizing throe
Has not destroyed my spirit.—Still I live
Yet dread new life.—Strangers ye are not.
I have in dreams of holiest confidence
Seen ye hang o’er me, heard your seraph-songs,
And mingled in your praises; yet I tremble
And shudder from your spotless purity.—
“Sister,” ye hail me; and your beaming eyes
Dance in their joyousness, and pearly tears
Of rapturous delight still welcome me.—

Ye bid me soar, and your impatient wings
Reflect the lightnings of yon piercing flame.—
Dragged down, impeded by my earthly stains,
I yet ascend with ye.—I yet am drawn,
By supernatural power, upward still :
And as the earth recedes, that look of love
Still brighter glows.—I see, I hear, I feel,
Yet nothing know save that pure radiance.—
Blot after blot, stain after stain, each speck
Of deadliest blackness, in the fervid gaze
Ever disappears.—Impure, I purer grow,
And night's dense darkness looked on by that sun
Blazes in noontide splendour.—Ye, who were
As suns to my o'er dazzled eyes, beam but now a
stars,

And yon all-purifying light concentrated
In me, streams forth upon you.—And yet ye smile.—
Ye envy not my glory.—Ye rejoice,
Ye joy in my rejoicing.—Loving once
An outcast reptile ; love, in increasing strength,
Increases upon its increase, as I exult
In the glad glory, and one halcyon cloud
Of effulgence bears us onward.—Brighter still,
And brighter, as the living chariot urges
It's breathless swiftness, in intensity,
As thousand times ten thousand earthly suns
Had, in one blaze, combined their fiercest strength
The keen ebullience deepens :— * * * *

Veiled by their wings.

Their glittering crowns downcast, their amaranth
wreaths

Strewing the sapphire pavement, their joyous harps
Vocal with praise ; I hear the songs of angels, jubi-
lant ;

And hearing * * * * *

Foretaste of bliss :—

The yet unsatiated hope of joy,
The faith in my Redeemer's promises
Sustain me still * * * * *

Yes. I have seen, in faith,
The beatification of my hope. Henceforth I rest
In confidence assured :—The golden gate
Yet sways not on its hinge : the bars of light
Yet leap not from their hold : the flaming bolts
Yet start not from their sockets : the glad words
Yet have not filled all Heaven : echoing choirs
Yet have not raised the everlasting hymn
Of Moses and the Lamb : and the pure bride
Yet has not met the Bridegroom :—yet I rest
Sure in my hope and hopeful in my faith.”

Patriarchs and martyrs, prophets priests and kings,
A goodliest multitude of goodliest form,
Each with his censer, each with golden harp

And each one gem of purest effluence
Fill the wide scene of gladness. Harp to voice
And voice to harp resonant, onward they sail
In holiest unison : one more denizen
Has Eden gained, and one more cup of joy
Is added to their happiness. All love, all peace,
All joy, all faith, all gladsome gratitude ;
One heart, one mind, one spirit ; all sufficed
And none redundant.—In such chair of state,
Such car of splendour erst the prophet rose
From Earth to Heaven, and angelic guards
So honoured, so acclaimed him, yet not with love,
More holy, more intense.

These to their rest
Soar on the blithsome ether ; those to earth
Again return ; yet, though parted far
By realm on realm of space, the bond of truth
Still intervibrates, and the intellectual sight
Joys in each triumph hoped, each prize atchieved.

Reversed his sword of flame,
In placid majesty the star-girt guardian
Of Eden's portal sits ; in his rejoicing charge
Rejoicing.

As the eager hosts pour through,
Stone unto column answering, hinge unto valve
Responsive, waking melody, emit
Subduing sweetness. The enjewelled sward,

Trees stooping with rich odours, vocal flowers,
And birds whose thrilling melody the spheres
Listen to dwell on, with the angel hymn
Mingle glad melodies, and choral lays
Float through the ambrosial clouds, respondent all
In pleasure, and respondent all,
In palpitating gratitude, as, bending
At the lowliest altar of Eden, the newly arrived
Prostrate adores: while, not prostrate, her thoughts
Ascend beyond the ascents of earthly days,
And taste the foretaste of Elysium
From that pure sea of glory, where, supreme
In his own goodness, dwells the only One
All true, all holy.—Thence he bends
Downward to Eden, his love-beaming eyes.
And in his inmost essence, feels a thrill
Of pleasure in his creature's happiness;
And interchange of worship and attention
Blesses the giver, and the receivers of
Bliss erst by them unimagined.

Thus while they
Cloudless of sorrow, wait until the sum
Of happiest creatures is realised; those on earth
In stupefaction sitting, gaze around
Where the grave has stretched her spoil, ghastlily
Smiling her bitter satisfaction; and around
Nought see but sad mementos.—There they sate
One leaning o'er her babe,—and, blest as earth

Gives blessing, garrulous of hopes
And prospects in futurity, another
Lived o'er her former days ;—or, there they walked—
Or there,—and the full cup of happiness recurring
In exaggerated sweetness, nature sinks
At the humiliating contrast, and tears choke
The utterance of grief :—while, clasping close,
As clasp war-stricken men the slaying lance ;
Clasps the lone widower, his lone baby-boy,
Whose unsuspecting prattle recks not the woe
It causes in it's innocence :

Alas !

Poor shadows we, that in another's gain
Count our own loss.

RETRIBUTION.

" Be thy will done, Creator and Sustainer
 Of all Thy works. A speck obscure am I
 In thy unbounded universe, where, orb on orb
 Roll in their destined curvatures, fulfilling
 Thy highest will, joyfully Thee acclaiming
 In measures faultless, as, harmoniously,
 Dimension, weight, nature, and orbit, exactly
 Relate to each other.—Vast are all Thy works.
 Superlatively wonderful, beyond
 The ken of angels; infinitely good,
 In me in all; herb, reptile, fish, bird, beast,
 In man, highest of terrestrial beings, worst, far worst
 Of all.— Me hast thou charged
 And I have borne him, for that it was Thy charge,
 Stained though I am by his deeds of cruelty,
 Rapine and bloodshed, fraud and violence,

Filthy, and hateful, and degrading crime.
 Yet am I, in myself, Thy glorious work,
 Compacted of elements, each inscrutable,
 Each, in itself, perfect. Thankfully to Thee
 I render up a portion of my children,
 Praise, bless, adore thee ; bow in homage down
 Rejoicing in their happiness : submissively
 Awaiting that dread summons, which will to the centre
 Dispart, and from each inmost, dark recess
 Where sin has stained me, as avengingly
 Pluck out the secret fibres of offence.

Dissolution

Is to me as renewal, so that it be Thy will."

Thus, as with voice

Of clearest utterance, though voiceless, Earth
 Complains against fallen man.

And he, whose charge

It is to wield nature's mightier elements,
 In his high station musing, thus replies :

"No void shall ever be

In the vast universe : all, mystically, shall
 To all eternity hymn forth His praise.
 Hymning His praises, purified by fire,
 Renewed good and glorious, in His works
 Filling thy station, instrument of blessing
 So shalt thou still exist. Ineffaceably
 'Tis written.— Day and night,

Summer and winter, never yet have failed,
Nor shall the word e'er change.—

A thousand weeks

Here have I, in most anxious office, served,
Only sustained by His pervading power,
Pervading and sustaining all His works.—
Nations have changed, as fluctuating waters,
One risen, another fallen. Light, progressively
Has tinged each summit of the rolling mass,
Or awhile lived embosomed.—Evil, and good,
Sorely have exercised man's attribute,
Freedom of thought and action.—Of pure religion
True revelation came not to succeed
Corrupted tradition ; until his poor conjecture,
Futile and weak, unsatisfactory,
Unholy, infamous, had plunged him down
A chaos.— Adoringly,
The holy purpose eagerly have I marked
Sailing, a lonely ark upon a deluge
Convulsed, dark, fathomless, impenetrable
To vision less than almighty. Rejoicingly
The gleaming beacon have I seen emerge,
Millions exulting in its brightness, millions
Amid the rude turmoil safe."

* * * * *

As ever-lapsing time
Still in his trackless swiftmess, hastens onward
To the dread, eventful day ; and change after change,

Woe after woe, have led the hearts of men,
Trembling in fearful expectancy, to watch
In terror for it's dawning, Angel hosts
Not less intently watch ; upon their guard
Never sleeping.—

Silent in his march,
The Angel of Destruction, discriminatingly,
Here one, and there another, ceaselessly
Summons :—and as the numbers thicker falling
By war, by plague, by famine, visit all
The nations with extreme perplexity,
Their Guardian Angels, the Destroyer
Entreat.

THE ANGELS OF THE NATIONS.

“ Reverse, reverse the avenging sword.”

THE DESTROYING ANGEL.

“ Holy Angels, keep your guard.”

THE ANGELS OF THE NATIONS.

“ We, intently looking, stand
Prompt to obey the mighty hand,
Which, even now, we clearly trace
Limiting the human race.—
Mightier events we feebly see
In dark and dim futurity ;
But thou, endued with keener eye,
Canst read that deeper prophecy.”

THE DESTROYING ANGEL.

“ Yet awhile, offence shall cease,
Yet awhile, a time of peace
Shall fill the awful, dreadful pause
In Retribution’s certain laws.

* * * * *

THE ARCHANGEL OF THE NATIONS.

“ Back roll the clouds : intensely bright
Glow the bounds of infinite
And finite.—Read the mighty scroll.—
Through the living letters roll
Living fires ; fires to consume
The temple, shrine, and altar-tomb :
Living fires ; fires to devour
Each pigmy toil of human power.—
Fearfully through every line
See, careers each wondrous sign.—
Nearer, nearer, see they run.—
Blaze in lightnings “ All is done.”

THE DESTROYING ANGEL.

“ TIME, WAS.”

Silence,—

A still, calm, clear, terrible silence, as it were,
audible

In it's very stillness, universal space
Holds in appalling thrall,—

Increasing in it's might,
As crashing thunders over thunders roll
Re-echoing ; the Archangel's pealing lip
Twice, and again, outcries

“AWAKE !”

Filling each interval
Eagerly-anxious, ministering spirits
Carol :

“Wake, oh wake.—Sisters of light,
Plume your wings, essay your flight ;
Heavenly love, in mercy bright,
Wakes you for ever to fresh delight.”

“AWAKE !”

“Wake, oh wake.—The fetters are riven,
Glory and life for ever are given ;
Glory that gleams like the mystic seven,
Shrining the throne of the highest heaven.

“AWAKE!”

“Wake, oh wake.—’Tis a holy choir,
 Honied sounds, and words of fire
 Dwell in their lips :—the strain raise higher ;
 See the earthly forms respire,

AWAKE ! AWAKE ! ”

And from the yielding earth,
 Rise, in their righteousness, resplendent forms,
 Mortal, yet all but immortal.

In such a glorious harvest, where shall the reaper
 Bind his first sheaf ?—

In silence, attentively
 Listen to the awakening accents.—

THE BELIEVER (*arising from her tomb*).

“Morning, opening her dewy eyelids,
 Greet us with music, lovelier than e’er
 Played round the harp-string, lingering ere it fled
 The faëry hand that waked it. Purest dews
 Gleam brightly on the leaflets, glittering
 In the glorious sun-beams. Orient gems of light
 All-coloured, sparkle with ten thousand dyes
 Of different temper. Balmiest fragrance
 Drops from the zephyr’s wing. Delightful Morning ;
 So fresh, so healthful, so imbued with incense,
 So light, so pure, from thy Creator’s presence

First didst thou bless the earth.

Awake, awake,

Awake, my love : awake, my little one ;
 Baby, awake and gladden your mother's eyes.
 Hark, hark, my love, my life : awake and hear
 That rapturous measure. 'Tis as yet I dreamt
 Of those fair valleys, where eternal youth,
 Eternal infancy, unchanging looks,
 Which, marked as aged, yet more aged grew not
 In ages unnumbered, bade me fondly deem them
 The abode of blessed spirits.—Hark ! ”

THE SONG OF THE GUARDIAN ANGELS.

“ Hail, hail, all hail !—The Day of Grace,
 Wakes to life the human race,
 Life that really ever lives :
 Life that never, never ending,
 Still with blessings, blessings blending.
 Purest joy for ever gives.”

THE BELIEVER.

“ The ascending mist

Bears spiritual forms : the embodying air
 Teems with effulgent imagery ; ascending
 All.—Such visions, and such winning harmony
 Bewilder.— Deceive me not ;
 Oh, be not treacherous ; my doting eyes,
 Swim not in tears.—My father, my mother

Fresh from the bowers of Eden visit me.
 Ethereal fragrance breathes around their forms
 Gem-dropt are their aged tresses, light celestial
 Mildly resplendent, attracts, yet dazzles not,
 Mine eyes towards them.—Oh, awake, awake,
 And thus restrain me not.—Life of my life,
 If ever I was pleasing to thee, wake, my husband ;
 Wake, wake, my child.

They awaken.—See, my mother,
 Angelical their looks, in majesty
 As first-created man ; as Eve's best-born
 When infancy first lisped, and the prattling tongue
 The look interpreted. See, they welcome us,
 They cheer us.— * * * * *

Unknown buoyancy
 Lifts me ———Alas—alas, my mother !
 Ah me !—— I have slept the death-sleep.
 Light breaks upon me.—This eventful dream
 Wakes in reality.— This awful place,
 This gate of heaven, these splendent messengers,
 'Though radiant with seraphic dignity,
 'Though love, 'though kindness, beam in their eyes
 of light
 And play upon their lips—dreadfully
 Announce the Day of final Retribution.
 Alas, how unprepared to meet that Judge
 Which knows the heart."

Amidst the gladdening scene,

In desperate, unrecking malignity,
 Demons to demons, imitative cries
 Of spirits in torment utter.

THE BELIEVER.

“ Ah me ! Alas, my brother.—
 It was a voice like his, but so unearthly
 Is the moan of anguish wicked men uplift
 Despairing upon the death-bed—

Another cry

As of one falling down a precipice—
 A stifling shriek—the rushing wind
 Displaced beneath him—the branches crash—
 And the black, poisonous pool
 Bubbles.”——

THE ASSAILING.

“ Wail, wail, wail and howl,
 The heart is dark, and the conscience foul.”

THE BELIEVER.

“ Ah me ! O King of Heaven, thou knowest
 Mine inmost soul. Tremblingly hoping,
 Ascending to thy presence, Saviour of Light,
 Have mercy on my darkness.”

THE FIENDS.

“ Mercy shall sleep, and Justice severe,
 Quail not, swerve not for woman's tear.”

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL.

“Cheer thee. Be cheered.”

THE CHIEF FIEND.

“Fine minion, flee ;
Of the spoil and the prey deprive not me.
Though swiftly ye sail, ’tis a worthy prize,
And swiftly as ye shall my legion rise.”

THE FIENDS.

“We pant, we toil, we strive in vain
The outskirt of heaven we never shall gain.”

OTHER FIENDS.

“Envy, malice, revenge, and hate,
Give us but strength, we fear not defeat.”

THE CHIEF FIEND.

“Beyond us they soar, but I scent the track
No sleuth-hound so sure at the wild slave’s back.
Viewless—in mean disgraceful spite
He strives to blind us with arrowy light.”

THE SONG OF THE GUARDIAN ANGELS.

“Spirits, haste ye, haste to meet us ;
Angels, Cherubs, kindly greet us.
We have watched o’er the charge we tended
Watched ’till the sleep-of-sleeps has ended.

To the Believers.

Death might seize, but death retains not,
 Rest like your's the spirit pains not,
 Brighter rise ye, fairer, clearer,
 Beloved of Heaven, than Angels dearer.

We ne'er sinned, ye, sin despising,
 Greatly o'er the assail are rising;
 Cleansed in Him, whose love prevailing
 Wept away his creatures' failing.

Honour, praise, revere, adore him,
 See forms of glory hovering o'er him,
 See angels, veiled, before him bending;
 Hark! they the crystal vault are rending
 with Allelujahs."

* * * * *

Everlasting glories
 Pour seas of light from the dazzling gates of heaven
 Myriads of spirits, resting in blessedness,
 As in an amphitheatre ranged round,
 Look down in eagerness, as the ascending train
 Verge on the threshold steps.

Before the Lamb,
 Angel, Archangel, Seraph, Cherub, Power,

Dominion, Principality, and Throne ;
 Mysterious essences, inconceivable
 By finite intelligence, irradiate
 All inferior splendours.

Nor word is known,
 Nor terms descriptive yet have been devised
 Faintly expressive of that central light,
 Before which, light itself is dark, impure,
 Vile, outcast.

At the uttermost limit
 Of the thronged auditory :—the anxious gaze
 Of angels and of men :—single—unstayed,
 And aidless of all aid, save Heaven's, the suppliant
 For pardon pleads.

THE BELIEVER AT THE BAR OF JUDGMENT.

“ Penitent,
 Deeply repentant of my secret crimes
 Of thought, word, deed ; hateful, vast, numberless ,
 At this awful bar, I bow,
 Submissive to thy sentence.—Be thy grace,
 Blessed Creator, in me magnified.”

From the Holiest light,
 Vividest effluence, shrine impenetrable

By created vision ; calmly audible
The fearful question thrills through shrinking space.

“ WHO WILL REDEEM ? ”

And One, whose form is as a Son of Man,
Yet, so exalted, so surpassing all
The forms of men created, that blasphemous
Words were to trace his holy lineaments :
As man, as God, as brother, as Creator,
All-perfect in his mediatorial character,
With his merit shields her ; and with looks of love,
Of pity, and of mercy, as the Atoning Victim,
Places himself between her and destruction.

From that obscurest depth,
Where Earth, in dizzy distance, wheels her round,
Toiling, the Accusing-Spirits climb their way,
Thus far allowed.—Retreating from the gaze,
Hang back the meaner crew ; but, he whose tempting
First allured them from their fealty, still first,
By his false sense of honour, and contempt
Of danger, onward led ; atrociously
To his rebellion adds insult.

SATAN.

“ Redeem her ?—Who ?
Is she not mine ?—A worthiest company,

Greater and fairer, kings, queens, and princes,
Who ruled and lived as spirits of superior mould :
Kings in their own right, mighty, master-minds,
Throned by their own achievements, as on my throne,
Await this companion.—Am I thus bound to toil
Upward, despite of my nature, for that thou pleadest
A few weak wounds and bruises? Have not I
Wounds, bruises, tortures? Have not I that which
 poor
Effeminate wretches call, my glorious penalty
Of glorious greatness?”

 Scoffingly, so speaks he,
Sidelong in look, in proud, contemptuous tone,
Daunted, yet daring; to the Guardian Spirit.
 No higher yet attempts
His quailing eye to glance.

 Mildly reproving him,
The Guardian Spirit replies.

 “Him, less than the Highest,
Yet with the Highest equal, thus permits thee
In his forbearance. Knoweth none more than thou
The strength of his anger.”

SATAN.

 “Nor none less than thou
His justice. Only less than the highest, or equal
As of right were mine; in essence superior

As more enduring. Flatteries and ease
To worthiest minds are charmless.”

Collecting

Like a determined criminal, every drop
Of blood malignant, for a reproachful lie
Rejoins he.— Forbearing, as she sees
Forbearance best, aside the Guardian Spirit
Attentively stands.

SATAN.

“ Me strive not to defraud
By innocent look, eye downcast, tricking tear,
Or reverential grovelling. Affection and outside propriety,
Connubial, filial, and parental love,
Bar not my plea : the very birds and beasts
Had these. These are not such perfections
As you to man attribute. Nought care I
For such a flimsy triumph, but to expose
Your hollow justice strive.—Left in the contest
What had ensued, if unaided?—Prate not I
Of loosest thought, pride, or idolatry
Of her fair person, of pompous charity,
Rags, paintings, patchings of external virtues :
These pass I, lightly, as for my accusation
Too despicable.— Amongst my host
Held but one back, from the strife of glorious deeds,
Disgrace, derision, vilest ignominy
Were his, for ever. Such is my even justice.—

Foremost stood she, the type, the ideal exemplar
Of perfect Christian virtues, fervently
In heart and deed devoted, ever-striving,
Aye, ceasing never, his deeds to pourtray
On earth, who here sits Judge. Here was no pride?
And by such flattery, sits unwarped her Judge?—
So, vauntingly in the van forestationed,
This was her duty, and she failed herein
As a very braggart.—When the covert glance,
And alluring smile, drew incense to her beauty,
And in her toils a willing captive enthralled:
One, aye superior, in estate, wit, person
To the common herd of fools; on idle pretence
Of his irreligion, she closed scoffingly
Affection's gates, and, aye, exulting in
The triumph of the worm's foul banquet,
Wept falsed tears.—She forsook the fight,
When, were her Maker loved, body, soul, all,
Were but meet sacrifice another to rescue
From The Opponent.—Did not he you laud
So act, so die?—But forsooth, was he
Corrupt, licentious, as her uncharitable imagination
Had pictured him; and the too susceptible,
Warm trust of the heart-strings, was to be rudely
snapped
Upon such pretence as this!—Nay, minion, nay.—
We plead before a Judge, who must need be just
Or adjudicate no longer. Unjust be he,
All be his equals.”

With noble scorn,
 Such as possesses one, who assuredly knows
 His adversary consciously conceals
 Portions of truth, and on a garbled fact
 Grounds accusation : repelling the attempt,
 Answers the Guardian Angel.

“ Were not assembled hosts
 Of finite intelligences, hither called from immensity’s
 Most distant orbs, to witness the assay
 Of Man, and the proof of his Maker’s benignity,
 Waste were my words : for thou, and such as I
 Know motives, treasure up thoughts ; and the dread
 Judge,
 Needs not thy accusation, nor my testimony.—
 Beneath his vengeance, less than our regard,
 Are thy taunts, Satan.—Degenerated, and
 Degenerateable still to all eternity,
 Less and still less, eternally, shalt thou resemble
 Thyself in thy former brightness, when, sun-dia-
 -demed,
 In foulest rebellion, thou the third of heaven
 Round apostate ensigns drewest.

Hear ye, O Men !
 And hear ye, Angels ! as I testify
 In the immediate presence of my Maker,
 And by his grace sustained, how steadily,
 In her own strength not trusting, still she clung to,
 And still assistance prayed from Him, whom to be-
 seech

Is to propitiate.—Worn, and vexed with toiling
Against the rude surge of adversity,
And by the world's temptations sorely beset,
Yet still amidst their pressure, did she strive
Others to save from danger, other to arm
Against temptation, others to fortify
Against impending trial, others to cherish
Who well nigh had sunk down, and others to raise
Whom deceivers had subdued. And, yes, she strove
As with Almighty fervour, to disenslave
Satan's firm-bounden thralls.—Witness around me,
ye,

Who, as my fellow-watchers, warded off
Ill from the sainted head ; who treasured up
The pure out-pouring of the grateful heart,
And registered in heaven's archives, deeds
Which Heaven loves to read.—Unfearingly,
I here appeal to the true registry
Of death, of life.—Trace on it's burthened page,
Crimes, errors, written in tears : but—yes, my friends,
Exulting, here, upon this ampler scope,
See virtues graven in characters of light :
And, witness at it's end, a signature
Of love, of faith in His redeeming love,
Through whom the universe, in all it's beauty,
In all it's majesty, in all it's immensity,
And perfectness exists.”

THE BELIEVER.

“ In all thy deeds,

Holy and just art thou. Thy will be done."

Incomprehensibly,
Transcending all that seraphic intellect
In it's sublimest musing, could, incipiently,
Conceive of self-humiliation ; once, upon earth,
As but a man, yet perfect in purity ;
He knew our sorrows, wept our bitter tears,
Felt our keen anguish, shared our misery,
And tasted of our death-cup, and wrung out
The dregs of shame from the grave, illumining
With glory the vale of death.

Mysteriously
God became Man. Far more mysteriously,
That man, as God of all, above all height
Beyond all thought, in supremest majesty
Judging his fellow men, in mercy restrains
The intensity of his love ; and, 'though that love
Yearns as a mother's, who her long-lost child
Sees, blainless, from some lazar issuing,
He looks around :

The sun, in mightiest strength,
Leaping from the torrid wave, throws, flashing o'er
Each mountain summit, his awakening glow
While plains lie wrapped in night : so lucidly,
Amidst surrounding space, assembled worlds
Of throbbingly attentive spirits rejoice
In the divine effulgence :—

Low, he looks

Where, outstretched upon heaven's pavement, lies
 his creature
 Submissive in her hope, and in her fear
 Submissive :—

Where angelic eyes beheld
 A form of earth, in earthly vestiture
 Stands an immortal Seraph.—Angel-eyes
 Glitter through grateful tears; and angel-lips
 Dwell on her adoration.

THE WORSHIP OF THE REDEEMED CHRISTIAN.

“ Holy, Holy, Holy,
 Thou art holy.

In Thee renewed, even in this purity,
 A wonder of angels, a new-born child of heaven;
 Thy work, thy gracious work;—beneath thy mercy,
 Less than the least of thy perfections, prostrate
 I praise, I worship, I adore Thee.

Holy, Holy, Holy,
 Thou art holy.”

When, from the cloud,
 The indignant Angel of the Covenant
 In wrath looked down, and an invisible power
 Brake Egypt's chariot wheel, and host confused
 Stumbled o'er host confused, as the last foot
 Stepped from the ocean-bed, and the dry ground
 Received it: so now, a choral shout

From all heaven's blissful legions triumphing,
Ascends.—

THE HYMN OF THE ANGELIC HOST.

“ Worthy,
Worthy art thou,
Worthy art thou, Redeeming Lamb ! to receive
Power, and honour, and glory.

Worthy art thou,
Worthy art thou, for evermore to bear,
Supremest dominion.

Worthy art thou,
Worthy art thou, for evermore to reign,
God over all,
For ever.”

Silent the acclaim :—in far inferior strains,
Strains to yet-infant intellect adapted
Greet the blest spirits, their Sister.

THE GREETING BY THE BLESSED SPIRITS.

“ Evermore in honour seated,
Evermore by angels greeted,
Glorious, sister spirit, hail.

Bright, in virtue rising higher,
Glow thy intellectual fire,
Cleansed from earth's concealing veil.

Blessing, honour, glory, power,
Welcome this thy natal hour
Natal hour of endless day :
Ever flowing, still unceasing,
Mercy, mercies still increasing,
Life no more shall pass away.

Active virtue still prevailing,
On some gracious mission sailing,
We with thee shall ever raise ;
Songs of triumph, strains of pleasure,
Love the theme, blest love the measure,
Love be our's, be His the praise."

Ascending in her strength
Amid all brightness, brilliantly distinct
She greets their congratulation.

THE REDEEMED BELIEVER'S SONG.

" Blissful visions, joys ecstatic,
Meet my eye, salute my ear ;
Saints in glory, spirits seraphic,
Hail my birth, prepare my sphere.

Songs melodious, sounds celestial,
Streams of pleasure, gems of light,
Bowers of wisdom, realms of wonder,
Heightless, depthless, infinite,
All hail me.

Hail ye, hail ye, Spirits fair :
Hail ye, hail ye, Sisters dear :
Hail ye, hail ye, Friends,
For ever,
All hail !”

Enduring, as endure the envious,
With blanched cheek, and brow enforced to lour
Over the unsteady eyeball, mutteringly echoes,
In despite, the Accusing Spirit, melody
Which tortures,

As the exultation
Sinks in repose, and distant murmuring,
As of village bells at even, kisses the ear
With soothing undulation : aloud he cries,
Raising his scathed countenance in scorn,
And bitter mockery :

“ This, this ye call
Unswerving justice.—Lately escaped
Or hoping to escape ; this host, subservient
Through fear, not love ; with taunts injuriously

Think to annoy me, and to wound a spirit
Ever unimpressible, above sensation, one
Who calmly bears, and smiles contemptuously
At the million's contumely. Such millions hate
Despises, as I hate Him, close-entrenched in light
To all inaccessible.— A prouder throne
Accessible to all, I proudly fill ;
Shrined in the hearts, firm-rooted in the affections
Of spirits, each the weakliest, mightier
In intellect and daring, than the highest here
Who thinks he blazes.—Hear ye, and blush.
There look.—There they, in proof of my truth,
Bear willingly a willing subject, dimming
Your gorgeous pageantry, and veiling eyes
Star-born with tears effeminate.”

Back, audaciously
Summoning up his latest power to chide
The Being he blasphemes, e're the tremendous,
Huge bolts of Hell pen him and his crew accursed ;
As, o'er a war-scooped chasm, some dark tower
Although tottering, from it's ruined battlement
Launches vindictive fires ; so, on vacuity's
Quick-crumbling edge, gloomy, vast, and appalling
Leans the Arch-Rebel, stubbornly repressing
Care, rankling-thought, and pain, hourly that marr
More that original brightness, which, when above
 them far,
And seated near to the Highest, angels witnessed,
And in his joy rejoiced.

Yet, gnaw his vitals
 Shame for malignity, and deadliest fear
 Of torment, pertinaciously intitled
 Glory and honour, 'though for that sceptre's weight
 No one would stoop; 'though envying, none would
 share.

* * * * *

Explosions, stunning
 The curdling senses, sounds unutterably
 Chilling, subduing Nature's faculties,
 Locking the senses, paralysing all
 In stupefying horror: in one wild
 Continuous upwhirl, break into nothingness
 Earth, Sea, and Air:—

Amidst the tempestuous fray
 Fiends, in mad uproar yelling, incumbent rocks
 Livid with foetid sulphur, hurl on high
 Baring death's dreadful, secret prison-house
 To the fiery concave; here, ebullient
 With seven-fold furnace heat; here, lurid, wan,
 Blood-stained, appalling: there, hoarsely roaring
 Like fierce Trolhaëtta's headlong water-rush,
 'Whelming the lone canoe-borne wanderer
 Caught in it's boiling eddy.

Hurtling hail
 Of scalding embers, snow of torrid flame,

Spouts of bitúmen, hellish fires, exceeding
All that the cruelty-nursed mind conceives,
Incessantly falling.

Death's noisome, mantling pool,
Scaffold and Gibbet : Couch of luxury :
Prison and Pesthouse : and the Gilded tomb,
Mocking at death, o'er the rottenness within
Grinning, pour forth their draff.

SONG OF THE DEMONS.

" This is the grave ; I quaffed it's steam
Blotting the wan moon's sickly beam :
The clotting gore, and the clammy dew,
Stank and steamed on the baleful yew.

It whined, it moaned : the finger and thumb
Clutched the wind-pipe ; the dead was dumb :
Darkness, in terror, darker grew ;
Silence shall bear me witness true.

Grin ye, and glare ye. Hark ! I hear
The infidel curse, and the Atheist swear.—
Curse they bravely, and swear they well ;
There is no God—in the depths of hell.

There I, and I, and I, and I,
Sail on the moan, and ride on the cry :

Wailing our car, and the shriek our steed,
 Anguish and torture wing our speed.
 But hark, but hark !—Now hang we aloof,
 We hung the warp, but he shot the woof :
 'Tis in deadly record the tissue we twine
 When man stains with blood the venomous line."

THE APOSTATE. *Leaping from his grave.*

" Wine,—pour, pour more wine.—
 Drink deep in Lethe.—Curse upon the cup,
 And ye, mad harlots, why scream ye ?"

VICIOUS FEMALES.

" Rocks, mountains,
 Fall upon and bury us !"

AN EMACIATED FEMALE BEARING A FROZEN CHILD.

" Be righteous, Heaven.
 Though I must fall : Oh, spare not, spare not
 My vile seducer. Spare not him whose oath
 Robbed me of virtue, and to the bitterest woe
 Of starving penury, in my extremity
 Outcast me.— Revelling, surfeiting,
 Wallowing, while I, to the biting air,
 Uncanopied by aught but the rude storm
 That howled my obsequies, brought forth my shame,

And in death cradled it.—My baby boy,
Hold up to heaven, thy injured, innocent hand,
And thy progenitor, curse.”

THE FIENDS SIEZE HIM.

THE APOSTATE:

“ Unhand me ! Demon if thou art
Unhand me ! I am thy master-spirit still.
Loathed wretches ! Grin ye as ye will,
Point at me, hoot me, yell, sputter, gibber,
Mock me.—Off wretches ! I am greater than ye all
And in this turmoil but a momentary thrill
Endure.”

THE FIENDS.

“ Upward, upward.”

THE APOSTATE.

“ I stir not.”

THE FIENDS.

“ Then we drag you, spoil and prey
Of Hell’s dread arbiter.”

THE EXULTATION OF THE DEMONS.

“ Drag we, drag we the weary load,
’Tis a long, long way to the bright abode :
Goad we, goad we the victim on,—
He quicker will fall to the burning throne
Ha-ha, ha-ha !

The groan, and the gasp, and the shriek, and the sigh
Give us firm wings to bear us on high :
The smeared knife, and the crimsoned pall,
And the putrid brains on the dungeon wall.

Drag we, drag we the weary load,
'Tis a long, long way to the bright abode :
Goad we, goad we the victim on,—
He quicker will fall to the burning throne.

Ha-ha, ha-ha !

The oath, and the curse, and the evil wish,
The smile, and the vow, and the seasoned dish :
The philtre, the ring, and the priest, straw-built,
And the triumphing grin of consummated guilt.

Drag we, drag we the weary load,
'Tis a long, long way to the bright abode :
Goad we, goad we the victim on,—
He quicker will fall to the burning throne.

Ha-ha ! ha-ha !

The chalice despoiled, and the temple stained,
The oath of the altar and shrine profaned ;
The Book of Heaven in grave-dust trod,
And the curse denying the being of God.

Drag we no more, the storm is strong,
Hot are the steams that impel us along ;
Tempest and whirlwind are zephyred air
To the cry of revenge, and the shriek of despair.

Ha-ha ! ha-ha !”

In the foul triumph, triumphing, the Arch Fiend,
Thus taunts the Apostate's guardian.

SATAN.

“Aye, minion, aye.

Veil up that golden frontlet, and with eyes
Suffused, bend down.—At the high arbitrement
Of him, who in the loathing air was held
Of heaven and earth unworthy, yet who dare not
Gainsay me ; shame-melted, unwatchful spirit,
My subject do I claim.—Mutely dost thou stand ?
So stood not I, when, in despite, perforce
His sister was unrighteously borne off
To stall and stable with ye.”—

“Upward rise,

Minutes and hours :—day, weeks, years, ascend
And on your shadowy volumes bear along
The imperishable record.”—

From the dun, obscure, fleet by

The now-unforgotten moments, each on her disc
Pourtraying crimes, pourtraying pleasures,
Pourtraying miseries :—and, as if the thunder-peal
Of a reproaching conscience were not loud
Enough to startle hell, the bitter Accuser
Gives to each his bitter commentary.

“ Upon that orb
Mark the mad pleasure of the midnight swill,
And rank debauch. Estates and families
Staked on a die ; and ruin, gaunt as death,
Whelming whole villages.

On that twin-circlet see
Stretched on the bullioned couch, whose regality
Mocks the foul form which fills it ; he, who, trembling
At the last death-gasp, and as a coward cursed,
Died praying amidst your scoffs.

There, there, behold
My army. Mine in riot revelry,
Quaffing the dank dew of the filthy forms
Which greeted the sun's uprising.

There, I see
And, seeing I exult. There, ruin made
One kingly swoop. There, in that prison-house,
Yoked to disease, fast-linked to certain death,
On the straw-matted floor, that creditor
Whose unrequited labour, gnawed the sinew,
And fretted up the nerve, sits motionless,
While famine fevers mother, wife, and child.—
Upon it's reverse, see the proffered gold
Of the rich debtor, striving to allure
His daughter.—These are triumphs, these
All praise o'erpass.

And yonder,—there I see
Mortgage, and sale, and pledge, and legal art,
Burn trees, waste acres, crumble palaces,
Strip from progenitors their pittances,

Pillage the sister of her marriage-gold,
And on the dice-turn nobly stake it all,
And lose it all, as nobly.

Oh, to read

These quickly-wheeling shadows, substacked,
Moulded of fleeting nothing into books
Of veriest record, would beguile us of
Whole lives of transport.

Sober-pacing age

Has gently grieslied the front-bald head,
And the lank limbs stretch on the listless couch,
And the hard-gripping, gay voluptuary,
Husbands his gold, and pleasures : preying there
Where he was preyed on, and exchanging freaks
Of youth, for manlier virtues, manlier thoughts,
And systematized conduct. In the world,
That censurer unkind, considerably
Bowling to laws and customs, walking staidly,
And treasuring indulgence for his few
Compeers most trusted.

Such consummate worth

Bears fruit commensurate : Behold thy Son."

THE APOSTATE

" Who, who, who ?

Sounds like to mine !—that vile, demoniac look
As mine, degraded."

SATAN.

" Worthiest among worthiest deeds

Was this atchievement : not strengthening me
By units but armies pouring into my ranks,
Age after age.

And there, behold thy wife,
Attenuated sylph-like by thy kindness."

THE APOSTATE.

" Alas, alas, my wife !
Of fortune despoiled, by sophistry deprived
Of her father's faith, and by these hands out-turned
To beggary.—There, there my sister bends
O'er the poor wanderer, smooths down her couch,
Pillows her weary head, and pouring balm
And oil into her wounds, draws light and life
From on high to the sinner's death bed.—

Woe, woe, woe !

To me unutterable ; eternal woe !
There raves my child !—torn, from his mother torn
And by me—left—no—not only left
A prey, but by me plunged into depths,
Dreadfully horrible.

Woe, woe !—Alas !

What scenes of terror pour incessantly
Upon the accusing moments !—Poverty—
Wretchedness—crime—within the dungeon pent—
Dying in lazars—on the gibbet hanging
For crows and vultures—with diseases pining
Poisoned—slain—drowned—

Oh, direst agony !

That these, from these polluted loins sprang forth,

And living, lived accursed, died accursed,
And thus rise up!—

But—I know not these—
These were not mine.—Upon that river's brink
I strewed not putrid, starving carcases—
That land with misery I did not fill—
I did not burn those cities—I bound not,
I crammed not in that pestilential hold
My fellows.— In yon yawning wave
I whelmed them not—

There, there,—
Fresh miseries rise—hide, hide me!—Wrath on
wrath!"—

SATAN (*to the Guardian Angel.*)

"Fine minion, dimly
Thy glories vanish. Set upon such guard
Why slept thou?"

Veiling o'er her forehead
Wings, dropt with azure, lowlily bows down
The Guarding Spirit, worshipping:

"Thou, my Creator! Thou,
Preserver of all good:—only enduring
Evil to show forth thy justice:—knowest thou
As knowing all, how sedulously hope
Was cherished in me: how still I clave to,
Still watched, unweariedly, to baffle the arts

Beneath which he fell ; avoiding not my charge
"Till, in dread moment, throwing off thy fear,
Thee he defied."

With deadliest despair
Sore-smitten : o'er the ashy-hued cheek,
Paleness, quick-varies into paler hues.
Upon the burning orbit, glazing films,
Into their sockets bind, the else-starting
And livid eyeballs : and in the furred mouth
The parched tongue, inarticulately,
Rattles, as, slowly moving, with involuntary
But irresistible impulse round, the Apostate sees
In ever-living radiance, spirits pure
(Shorn of their lustre now) in pitying tears
Bewailing ; and amongst them, marked
By deeper shades of sadness, parents, and sister,
And them-rescued victims, bending, as though their
 knees
Grew to the crystal pavement.

" Hide," he cries,
" Hell, hide me : Hide me in thy inmost tortures !
Hide me from His benevolent aspect
Whose goodness is, torment intolerable."—

Down he plunges,—laughter horrible,
And shouts of derision following.

Gazing transfixedly,
All eye, all ear, o'er the dark, viewless strand,
Kinsmen hear kinsmen struggling, and the gloomy
Storm-Spirit echoes, through the moaning surge,
The expiring mariner's gasp.

More awful than their lone wailing ;
More infinitely sad, complaining more mournfully,
More utterly desolate in their cadences, deep throbs
Of sorrow gush amid the lament.

THE LAMENTATION OF THE ANGELS.

“ Worthy, worthy to have been,
Our friend, our companion,
Firmly hadst thou stood
Trusting in Him,
Who, sitting beyond the ken
Of angel eyes,
Glows in ineffable glory,
Yet scorns not
To dwell in virtue's bosom ;
How art thou fallen !

Goodliest in human form
And mental majesty ;
In knowledge, dazzlingly
Resplendent :
Yet, in mad despite,
Each perfect gift,

THE RENOVATION OF THE EARTH.

An emanation,
As 'it were a look benign, wherein
Compassion, mercy, and love, hold kindest strife
For noblest mastery ; from that bright point,
That centre, whence unnumbered radiations
Would embrace the boundary, could boundary be
Of infinite ; pervading the awful chaos
Of uttermost ruin, from impalpable
Untraceable nothingness, with power beyond
The utmost stretch of created intellect
To conceive it's slightest effort ; beneficently
The void refills.

Forms of embodied light,
Seraph and cherub, angel, mortal mind

Now shrined in immortality, o'erhanging,
Intently gaze, as the stupendous work
Re-rises into existence.

Sweeping round

From the obscure centre, vast tracts of substances
Rock, earth, or metal, up to the dewy dawn
In goodliest order emerge. In radiation,
Rear up majestic mountains their fair foreheads,
Collecting from the immensity of pure,
Elastic fluid, fertilizing treasures,
And, with benevolent pleasure, pouring down
In rill, and cataract, and reflux flood,
Plenty and blessing, over swelling hill
Wide spread champain, and undulating down.
In glad mœander idle they to enjoy
The faëry pasture ; and in their lucid mirrors
Paint visioned forms of ever-varying flowers,
Enamelling their margents ; of verdant forests
Hung with all fruits adapted to gratify
Immortal senses ; and ceruléan hues
Of hills at ethereal distance, sleeping in the calmness
Of heaven's enjoyment. Linger they amid such bliss,
Or gladly hasten down descending curves
Deep-dyed with pebbles of all lustrous hues
Out-vying gems of purest effluence :
Or, murmuring, responsive to awakening echoes
In the dim hollows of dim rocks, o'erpending
To view their ample frontlets in the clear waves
Where innocence and mirth, with joyous urns

Swell the swift eddy, on the bubble ride,
Or lave their blithe limbs in a purer joy
Than earlier nature knew. In Ocean's wide,
Capacious universe, where wonders wonder-enlinked
In hollow orisons, lift up their voices
To praise and to adore ; the gambolling floods
Dash deeply in enjoyment, carolling
Amidst the wild, melodious rush. Lithe forms,
Where beauty fitliest sits, enthroned in adaptation
For fullest happiness, the transparent deep
Shoot through in frolic joyance, tasting fruits .
Of liquid amber. Coral and coralline,
And sapphire rocks, and orient shells effulgent,
And pearly sand, and gems of glittering light,
And treasures of rich treasures, pave a path
Where wisdom, youth, and innocence, may rove
Eternally rejoicing, eternally
Collecting food for praise. O'er hill and dale,
Deep valley, craggy mount, where Iris strains
Her curtains ; o'er arid, or moistened plain,
Each in it's order, each contributing
To swell the universal harmony,
Bird, beast, and reptile revel. Peace and love,
Mutually assisted, mutually gratified,
Hang on each other's looks, or sleep in bland,
Confiding pleasure. Every inanimate,
And animated creature, each in itself
Consummately perfect, each in due gradation
Advancing towards the Unutterable Perfection,
Each manifesting power, wisdom, and love ;

In ever-rising chorus, note from note
Distinctly audible, yet mingling in one rich
O'erpowering burst of gratitude, awake
A correspondent gratitude in all
The unbounded infinite.—

THE SONG OF THE MORNING-STARS.

“Momentary was the pause,
Everlasting are our laws.

In thy destined course revolving,
Every shading mist dissolving,
Sparkling in the noon-tide beam,
Gem of Heaven's diadem,
Roll, roll on, thou lovely orb.
Momentary was the pause,
Everlasting are our laws.

Embellishing the azure night
Glow's thy renovated light ;
Twining in continuous zone
Beams thy tributary moon :
Blest abode of spirits blest,
Seat of pleasure, couch of rest,
Roll, roll on, thou lovely orb.
Momentary was the pause,
Everlasting are our laws.

Swell the hallowed symphony,
Voice and soul of harmony.
Raise in accents soft and clear
Strains which Heaven may stoop to hear.
As the vocal chords respire
In accordance with the quire
Roll, roll on, thou lovely orb.
Momentary was the pause
Everlasting are our laws.

Praise we Him, whose praise to sing
We revolve in complex ring.
Infinitely on infinite
Verging still, still infinite
In wonder, wonder still beholding
Newer wonders still unfolding
Roll, roll on each lovely orb.
Momentary was the pause,
Everlasting are our laws."

THE SHOUT OF THE SONS OF GOD.

"Ever watchful—Ever powerful—
Ever present—Ever knowing—
Centre—boundary—end—beginning—

Where Thou art brightest, there is Heaven,
Where obscurest, vales of woe.

Ever renewing—Never wearying—
Blessing still and still sustaining—
God of God, and Lord of Lord—
Holy, just, and true, art Thou.”

The genial joy
Systems from systems, as they nearer cōfine
On The Eternal Splendour, the melodious song
Raise higher ; ’till the universal peal
All heaven’s immortal essences prolong
In numbers mystical, for grosser ear
Too subtle, too surpassing.

* * * * *

Deity,
In the glad concord glows.

WHERE IS GOD?

Not in the dark, the fearful deep,
Nor in the dense-blue sky,
Nor in the wild, the howling storm,
Nor in the whirlwind’s cry ;

Nor on the mist-enshrouded mount,
Nor on the horizoned plain,
Nor in the centre-piercing cleft :—
Ye seek, ye seek in vain :
Nor height, nor depth, nor limit known,
Mark his sublime, mysterious throne,
Yet, God is every where.

Not in the awful void profound,
Leaping from sun to sun,
Grasping all heaven in one wide range,
Threading each mazy zone,
Can the untired, exhaustless soul
Sweep one star-teeming plain
And say, “ there dwells the Only One ;”—
Ye seek, ye seek in vain :
System, nor sun, nor world is known
Where glows his everlasting throne,
Yet, God is every where.

And, from the microscopic space
Where embryo atoms lie,
Where the strained eyeball strives in vain
To pierce the mystery ;
As from the ever-countless hosts
That gem the ethereal plain,
One still, clear, voice, resistless cries,
“ Ye seek not here in vain :

Here are his wonders, here his might,
Open, revealed to human sight,
For, God is every where."

And, streaming from the dreamy cave
Scarcely instinct with life,
And from the gorgeous, torrid realm
With nature's glories rife ;
From all the rich, exuberant earth,
From the all-teeming main,
Rises one universal shout ;
" Ye seek not here in vain ;
Here are his wonders, here his might,
Open, revealed to human sight,
For, God is every where."

He, from the unsparing, iron fangs,
Of cruelty and woe,
Leads mercy, and bids righteousness,
In holiest transport glow :
Justice, and truth, and light, and life,
Here raise, in holiest strain,
One full, harmonious, deathless shout,
" Ye seek not here in vain :
Even hence, from this bleak, desert shore,
Joy, hope, and peace exulting soar,
For God is every where."

And here, revealed to human sense,
Intangible, unseen,
Verging on sight, close to our grasp,
Within the living scene
Of his conspicuous providence,
We see his footsteps plain :
Burning in faith, convinced, assured,
We seek not here in vain :
In all his wondrous works confest,
Wisdom, and power, and love attest,
That God is every where.

Considering that, even if I were remotely acquainted with the peculiar Art of Dramatic Composition, the following subject must be, in itself, quite unfit for scenic representation ; I have treated it as a work to be read, and only to be realized, mentally.

I have endeavoured to pourtray the high-minded, patriotic, and devoted chieftain, and his daughter, in accordance with the beautifully natural sacred narrative. I have, in the fiction, exposed their constancy to such trials as might have occurred ; and have endeavoured to contrast them with such characters, as should render them more prominent : and I hope that, the recorded incidents, have been introduced appropriately to the times, and without violence to the historical facts ; and that they are clothed in not very ill-adapted language.

With what success ?—

JEPHTHAH.

A Sketch for

A DRAMATIC POEM.

PERSONS.

JEPHTHAH.

OTHNIEL.

ASAH.

GALEED.

MATTATHA.

ITHRA.

KALED.

MAHUDATHA.

ELROTHAN.

WARRIORS AND PEOPLE.

* * * * *

THE HIGH PRIEST.

* * * * *

HADASSAH.

AZUBAH.

PENINAH.

MAACHAH.

VIRGINS.

MIZPEH OF GILEAD.

PENINAH, KALED, AND OTHER ISRAELITES, LYING
UPON THE GROUND IN SACKCLOTH.

1st. Here meet we, stealing from our hiding places,
As worried wild beasts hemmed by hunters round,
Galled and distressed. No kindly ray of hope
In this dark, loathsome depth of desolation
To cheer us on.

2d. Alas, alas, my child !

3d. Alas, my father !

4th. I, by thirst impelled,
Crept with my starving, emaciated daughter
To the foetid, miry pool : from my weak grasp,
They tore her :

5th. All, all my children,
My wife, my parents, sleep in forgetfulness.
No blood of mine flows in a kindred vein.

6th. All mine still live ; living, yet in the clench

Of griping famine. Dim, shadowless spectres,
Scarcely human forms, they pick from the cleaving
earth,
Offal and refuse.

A corpse is borne across. A maniac preceding it.

MANIAC. Bring in rich venison. It is a goodly morsel,
We banquet with proud revelry and riot.
We hold a banquet with the full round worm :
I am the giver of the feast. Right welcome.
Most welcome. Sit ye.

Another corpse borne across : one mourner following it.

MOURNER. The first and last-born, mingle in one grave.
They rest in peace.

ITHRA, MATTATHA, GALEED, MAHUDATHA, *enter*.

ITHRA.
And I too, now have laid
My first, my last born, in the last dreary home.
Ye have reproached me, when my earnest voice
Implored ye to forsake those bestial gods,
Gods made in pride, in scorn, in discontent ;
That pain, and hunger, and the piteous wailing
Of friends, of kindred urged me. Now I know not
Kindred or friend. Nought but my country's wel-
fare
Prompts me to bid ye seek to outcast Jephthah.

GALEED. Will Jephthah aid us ?

MAHUDATHA. Vindictively will he
Reject us. Can Jephthah pardon ?
Will the dog forget his currish nature ?

ITHRA. I then defended him,
Unhappily but only by my words
When ye attacked with weapons. I with you
In tears of blood have wept those violations,
And I with you in lowliest abasement
Will beg—

MATTATHA. Mattatha begs not so,
Though sword nor spear were found throughout our
land
Our passions should be swords, despair our leader,
And naked bosoms laugh to mockery
The tyrant's corslet.

ITHRA. Mattatha, thy wife,
Thy newly betrothed, thy fondly cherished wife
Is at Ammon's mercy. Galeed, thy little ones
Have but one last, one scant, one noisome meal,
Thy pining parents wasted to skeletons
Vainly implore the pitying hand of death.

GALEED. Jephthah, and death, and vengeance, are but
words
Of one sad import.

MAHUDATHA. Will he be far more merciful than
Ammon ?

Will he not pluck your children from the breast ?
Will he not pour them into the lap of slaughter,
And surfeit death with mangled carcases ?

PENINAH. Out wretch ! that darest not look upon
the man
Thy serpent tongue defames.

KALED. Man of Belial !
Forget one moment thy perversity.

MAHUDATHA. Go in, go in : doting garrulity
Ill fits a time of warfare.

PENINAH. Boastful tongues,
Lessen valour's credit. Not so the traduced
Was wont to speak ; and, from his cradle upward,
Though ever conscious of his native worth,
None ever called him vain. In the midst of mirth
There was a moody wildness marked him out
As fit for noblest deeds. Breathlessly
He heard my tales of Deborah, and Barak,
Ehud, and Gideon. In his flashing eye
Defiance gleamed. The daring brow was knit,
The lips compressed, the eager hand close clenched,
And firm, yet tremulous, his rigid frame
Fixed in abstraction, marked the intensity
Of his generous ardour. I foresaw him then

Proud, noble, great, the Israelitish prince,
Conqueror of Kings. When ye maliciously,
Pray heaven forgive ye !—When ye taunted him,
And chased him like an accursed Gentile dog,
He told me ; they were memorable words,
And I have cherished them as choicest gems,
“ I never, never, never will requite it.”

MAHUDATHA. Go in, go in, and make your peace with
heaven :

Earth will not hear your babbling on the morrow.

PENINAH. And therefore speak I while it is, to-day.

ITHRA. The dregs of life are wasting ; all our hopes,
Each after each have vanished, like the mockery
Of water in a desert. Jephthah alone
Stands like a mountain in a parched plain.—

MATTATHA. To crush us while imploringly we seek
A shelter within it's shadow.

MAHUDATHA. Living by plunder,
A robber and an outlaw, one who delights
In reckless rapine, like the tiger rioting,
Swilling to the full of vengeance.

PENINAH. Man of Belial !
A woman calls thee, Liar. From my breast
The milk of mercy nursed him. Go to him

Did he delight in misery, were the wreck of famine
His blithesome jest, and did his revelling bands
Dance to the groans of Israel, yet he has
A child which draws him from the scene of blood.
The stern, relentless passion of the sire
Is softened by her impassioned gentleness :
His proud, severe, unbending bigotry,
Blended with her enthusiastic zeal,
And high conceptions of our destiny,
Is but a slight, a pardonable excess.
He acutely feeling, earnestly resenting
All we have done, yet she, imbued with love,
With strong attachment to her father-land,
Must make him our defender, our avenger.
Aggression, daunted by her angel tongue,
Sinks in submission. Pleading to his soul,
Persuasively adapting all her tones,
Her silver tones of pity, she will mould him
Even in despite of hatred, even though revenge
Stretched out our throats, and bade him feast to the
glut :
She, she will bid him save us.

MATTATHA.

But a frail hope.

GALEED. Yet let us not, in this our shipwrecked state,
Pass the last friendly lichen, that from the rock
Hangs down to aid us.

PENINAH.

Galeed, beg for us.

GALEED. Hopelessly hoping, we appeal to him.

MAHUDATHA. Hopes not Mahudatha. Nor would he hope.

[*They pass out.*]

* * * * *

THE LAND OF TOB.

HADASSAH AND AZUBAH.

AZUBAH. How sweet from the commanding, towering
steep

Of this fair mount, to see the laughing sun
Rush like a joyous hunter to commence
His ardent course : to taste the breath of morn
Perfumed with odours of ten thousand flowers :
To mark his slant beam gleam upon the high
Majestic cedars, and their tribute arise
As incense, mingling with the exuberant mirth
Of the gay chorister, whose whole soul fills
His music. Sweet 'tis to stand upon the tip
Of breathless expectation, listening still,
Mutely attentive to the rustling leaves
Which tell-tale of our footsteps.—

Nay, nay, no more

Of this idle musing.—Vacuity
Were a glad lover at such eager gaze.

HADASSAH. Poor wretched Israel ! How they in terror
steal

Cringing, and creeping, slinking through black ra-
vines

As guilty ghosts, while Ammon's flaunting banners

Dance gaily in the sun's broad, golden light,

And the sharp cymbals ring. Oh that they rung

His death-peal ! O ! that the God of mercy

Would waken Israel's soul, would bow their stub-

born knees,

Would from their bosoms tear the heart of stone,

And humble them in penitence. Foul, foul idolatry !

Dire, deadly demon !

AZUBAH. Nay, Hadassah, nay.

This moodiness will sear your faculties.

HADASSAH. Oh that the poisonous, the polluting stain

Which reeks to Heaven for vengeance, were not our,

Our dear, our cherished sin. Israel, Oh Israel !

My poor, unhappy country ! wretchedness

And misery, and woe, and pain, and death,

Have hurled thee down, have linked thee in their

fetters,

Have bound thee to thy God :—yet hast thou snapped

The merciful constrainers ; hast, like a high,

A full-fed horse, burst from thy plenteous stall,

And stung with furious madness, hast thrown down
 And trampled upon thy master.—Would, would that
 I could

Upon thy faithful bosom weep to death,
 If tears could save my country. But—but to you
 But—but to Othniel, dare I thus outpour,
 My consuming sorrow. Would, would that my
 father

Could once, could for one little moment, once forget—

Oh I would plead, as our forefather pleaded
 For the guilty cities.—You have borne with me,
 And I am calm, as this ethereal calmness
 Had sunk into my bosom.

AZUBAH. We spake of merriment but yesterday.

HADASSAH. Mirth is a hollow mocker at such griefs,
 And yet I must be mirthful, although my heart,
 Revolts against the seeming.

AZUBAH. There shall yet be days of mirth,
 There shall be shout, there shall be revelry.
 The darkest hour of night precedes the rising
 Of the glad sun: the chilliest, piercing hour
 Waits ever upon the day-break: and the blithe,
 Rich carol of the morn-bird, bursts from the deepest,
 Intensest silence. Even now the flaming orb
 Has with his bright glow, chased the ebon shade,
 And the pure rose, bathed in the morning dew

Gleams like a bride in tears of happiness.

HADASSAH.

And that sun's holiest light,
 First, loveliest, and most blessed of God's works,
 Dashing the full cup from the dreamer's lip
 Wakes up yon slave to gnawing misery.
 He sees no brilliance, hears no melting music
 Though earth's ten thousand voices swell the peal
 Of joyous melody. His seared faculties
 Drink them all in, but to corrode his soul,
 And fester in his heart. One drear, dead blank
 To him are heaven and earth. Cut off, cut off
 From all the sweet amenities of life,
 He has no commerce with the free-man's joy,
 He has no commerce with the free-man's hope,
 He has no commerce with the free-man's high,
 Majestic bearing. Degradation sits
 Cowering upon him. If, in moody rage
 He dare assert man's natural dignity,
 The whirling lash sounds in his shrinking ear,
 The galling fetter cankers his rankling wound,
 And into madness tortures him. Or if subdued,
 Crushed, trampled, spurned upon ;—hethinks, speaks,
 acts,
 As act, think, speak his masters ; has nor hand,
 Nor foot, nor tongue, nor eye, nor sense, nor soul ;
 But, bond-slave all ; blood, bones, and sinews, all
 Die in the bond-slave's brand ; and the first hour
 That robs him of his freedom, drags him down,
 And stamps him, reptile.—Oh, my bleeding country !

Such, such is Israel.—Israel rebelled,
 Israel threw off the light yoke from his neck,
 Yoke bent in mercy, and in blessing bound;
 And riot ran. Mad in the hot pursuit,
 Enfuriate in license, wild in misrule, and fierce
 As thousand thousand demons broken loose
 Red-reeking from penal fire.—God's yoke was hard,—
 God's yoke was heavy—God's yoke fretted them.—
 Yokes of their own they made, soft, polished yokes,
 Yokes to be snapped like willow wands, or wreathed
 Into ten thousand fancies.—Aye, they took to them
 Gods—such as men make.—Gods—whose abhorrent
 crimes

Ensanctified their own.—The God of Day,
 The Holy Queen of Heaven, Mother of Gods
 And men,—all Syria's Gods, all, all the Gods
 Of Sidon, Moab, Ammon, Philistia,
 Swart Egypt's spurious, impure progeny,
 Linked with proud Nimrod's fables.—Lightsomely
 They swam in the voluptuous dance, and blithe-
 somely

Struck their loud-ringing cymbals; right joyously
 They swilled the bewildering cup; and frantically
 Leaped, shrieked, sang, shouted, as the hungry fire
 Of Moloch ate up their children.—Gods such as
 these

Cruel, vile, filthy, and detestable,
 They raised above the righteous God of Heaven:
 And God looked down in anger; as a loathed,
 Repulsive morsel, spat them from his mouth,

Rejected, and abhorred them.—He, whose terrible
Vindictive anger, held up to mockery
The Gods, and brake the utmost strength of Egypt,
Struck down bold Moab, crushed fierce Amalek,
And, as a pigmy rends the meanest fly,
Plucked up the Anakim, disgustedly
Turned from his foster child, grieving in hatred,
And yearning in his wrath : abandoning them
To their own heart's lust, plunging them deep down
Into their own miry slough, and cursing them
To this vile slavery.—They sold their souls,
He sold their bodies ; and the deadliest visitation
That can befall free-men, fell heavily on them.
Slaves, slaves in soul, in spirit, mind, thought,
 strength,
In every energy still slaves, slaves, slaves.—
Oh Israel ! oh, my wretched, wretched country !
Sin is thy curse, and sin's fit recompense
The foul idolatry which binds thee in
This bitter slavery.

AZUBAH. Nay, nay, no more of this ;
The bright, glad, glow of freedom, reddens our
 cheeks,
And beats high in our hearts.

HADASSAH. Yes, freemen dare
Lift up to heaven, their fiery, eagle glance ;
And freemen, as it were, dare rush into heaven,
Pierce to the throne of God, and look down thence,

As God looks down upon his glorious works,
 To foster, and to love. The free-man's noble heart
 Holds a rich jewel, which no power but sin
 Can dim, or flaw : and his persisting strife,
 His stern contention against opposing worlds,
 His in-born spirit's onward, dauntless tread
 Through storm, through peril ; rising from each fall
 More vigorous, more determined, were a scene
 For angels to delight in.—God loves the free-man.—
 God's freedom sits upon his eager sword,
 God's freedom sits upon his beaming lance,
 God's freedom is his corslet, shield, and helm,
 And the blithe spirit of God's freedom, sits
 A guardian angel on his expanded brow,
 Lights up his falcon-eye, and glancing bright
 As God's own lightning, bears down victory,
 And binds her inconstant pennons.—Oh, I am
 proud,
 Yes, I am proud, Azubah, in my father,
 My free-born, freedom-loving, dear, dear, father.
 No other child ever had a dearer father,
 No other father has a dearer child,
 Than Jephthah and his Hadassah.—Would, would
 that all,
 That all, all Israel, linked in our happiness,
 Were free, were blest as we are.

AZUBAH.

And Othniel.

HADASSAH. Othniel, my brother, by the dearest ties

Of loving friendship, and confiding love.
I can be proud of noble Othniel,
The repetition of my princely father,
Ardent, fierce, bold, wild, and intractable
As the gyr-falcon : mild, balmy, gentle,
As gay Spring's earliest breath.—Nurtured together
As frolic antelopes, whose graceful necks
Beauty has twined with flowers, we ever have been
As sister, and as brother. Jephthah blessed us,
Linked our young hands together, half in sport
Half in prophetic earnestness. From that day
We thought one thought, acted one act, one soul
Informed our separate minds ; one holiest joy
Sleeping has nestled on our closed lids,
Waking has gleamed from each blithe-beaming eye.
And thou Azubah hast grown up with us,
Been our fast friend, hast laughed, hast wept with us,
And—

AZUBAH. And I can laugh, and weep, and frolic still,
And bear with moodiness, and glow, as glows
Thy enthusiastic spirit. And I can bless,
And I can hail the sun that awakes this morn
To witness—May Heaven's, heaven's choicest bles-
sings
Pure, fragrant dew-drops, fresh from Paradise
Alight upon your heads. Nay, nay, weep not,
Such pearls are unapt ornaments to deck
A blest bride's blushing cheek.

HADASSAH.

Yet could I weep
Until weeping grew into mirthfulness, if joy
Such as this bright day hails, were as the sun-light
Spread over the whole earth.

JEPHTHAH *enters*.

JEPHTHAH.

God save thee, child,
The God of Israel shower his choicest gifts
Upon ye both,

HADASSAH.

And, oh may Israel's God,
Still, still protect my father, be to him
Shield, spear, and hauberk.

JEPHTHAH.

Shield, hauberk, helm,
And gallant hearts behind them. My bonny bird,
The fresh-plumed owlet seeks to mate him with
The royal eaglet. The hyæna's cub
Aspires to the lioness.

HADASSAH.

You speak in riddles.

JEPHTHAH. Jesses, and bells, and lures; attractive
lures,

Are held out for the falcon: and she will sit
Upon the princely hand, and sleek her neck,
And fan her soaring wings and clutch her talons,

And harry down the dove, and—Nay my blithe bird,
Why look beseechingly? Thou hast to grant.

HADASSAH. That covert glance of merriment repressed,
Is at strange issue with thy constrained brow;
Eaglets and owlets were as fitly mated.
Thy mirth sits gaily on thy glowing cheek,
Thy mirth sits gaily on thy rebellious lip
And I will taste it's fragrance. I can look back,
Far, far, far back, and see thee thus in thy pride,
Thy youthful, manly, ardent, exulting pride,
When first my mother listened to thy vows.
And I as proudly love thee, my dear father;
And I, in all her womanly affection,
Glory to bless thee, and to call thee mine:
My own, dear father.

JEPHTHAH. My own, my own dear child.
I am as proud, as blest in thee, my girl:
I can as fondly, as in my youthful love,
Trace in thy form, thy mother's stately bearing,
That bright, keen glance which nerved my sinewy
arm
And added tenfold vigour to my gripe;
That tear-filled gaze, when the glad, the holy hymn
Melted and mingled with the evening's breath,
Beam, glow, flash, blaze, in thee; and thy glad
tongue
Pours but renewed music into my soul.
Thou art my rose, and I, thy nightingale,

And I could descant on thy breathing love
Until music grew enamoured of herself,
And my bright flower should weep her ecstasy.

HADASSAH. My dear, dear father.

JEPHTHAH. My sweet angel-child.
Angels, for angels have such holy love,
Angels, in angels feel such holy joy,
Angels, in angels have such unsinning pride
As thou and I have. I have guarded thee
As the jealous serpent guards the treasured gold.
And the Ethiop a more hopeful suitor were
To the wakeful dragon, than red Ammon's prince
To Jephthah.

HADASSAH. Jephthah and Ammon, in one unseparate
breath?

JEPHTHAH. Ammon, Hadassah, in one compressed
breath.

Yes, girl, that brindled dog, that bear's rough cub,
That——

HADASSAH. Nay, nay, be calm.

JEPHTHAH. Thy price,
Rubies, diamonds, pearls, gold, silver, 'fulgent brass,
And iron lucid as the mid-day sun,
Armour, and chariots, horses, pledged to o'ermatch

The whirlwind, oxen, sheep, goats, lambs,
And camels,—such a goodly equipage
Joseph sent not of all rich Egypt's wealth
To convoy our forefather. Israel's flocks,
And lowing herds, were poverty herself
To the proffered purchase.—Ill does Ammon think
Manasseh's virgins are for barter born,
That all the wealth of all th' ostentatious east
Were fit price for my daughter.—No, my child,
Thy heart as mine beats. Gold, is gold
For those who love it : fame, is garish fame
For those who seek it : honour is as truth
To those who prize it. These are no times to play
At fast and loose with fortune. Providence,
Will but protect us, as we keep his path,
Strait, stern, and rugged, but the only path
Of safety.—Men, are the kings, my daughter,
Men are the kings whom Jephthah matches with.
In these rough days, the warrior is the prince ;
The featest swordsman is the bonniest bridegroom,
The keenest hunter readily gathers fruit
Which blushes far above the sheep-herd's reach,
And Othniel, and Ammon, are as iron
And mouldering clay to each other.—So have I said.
So do I know Hadassah would have said,
Frankly, and fairly, and resolvedly.

HADASSAH. Heaven and my father, heard my plighted
faith,
Heaven and my father, ratified that faith,

Heaven and my father, would expel me from
 Their only-coveted love were I to forget
 My honour or my oath. It is a pure
 A sacred love: the love, my father sealed,
 And I am proud to bear it in my bosom,
 And blush not—for it is holy :—but had not
 Ear ever heard, and throbbing heart never beaten
 To the joyous impulse, Ammon the idolater,
 Had sued, had wept in vain.

JEPHTHAH.

Or threatened ?

HADASSAH. Threats to Manasseh's daughters, were as
 weak
 As to Manasseh's warriors, and—

OTHNIEL enters.

OTHNIEL. All hail, my father !
 Azubah, dear Hadassah, hail to ye both.
 The God of Jacob, our forefather's God
 Bless ye, protect ye :

ALL.

And bless Othniel.

JEPHTHAH. Thy quarry has been nobler far than often
 Yields to thy fleet-winged arrow.

OTHNIEL.

Stealing close

On the lee-ward side, between rocks and through
tangled brakes,
Death fell ere fear had cried. The outwatcher
Stood fixed, agaze at the instantaneous crash;
Then at his utmost speed, fled as we followed.
Our toil-strung compeers soon abated breath,
But Asahel and myself, less firmly knit,
Leaped as he leaped, ran as he ran, yet held
Our utmost effort in the leash, as poises
The falcon before he swoops. Ere we could strike,
A band of swarthy Ammonites, fully armed,
Headed our game: fear urged the headlong course
Full in his former trail, and he had fallen
As a bird into a net; but the swollen eye,
Seemed to implore our pity, and the gushing tears
Were as infants pleading. Down, intuitively,
Fell our relaxed arms, and the poor beast,
Halted as though to thank us; one strong bound
Placed him beyond pursuit.—We, in our turn
Were marked out for the chase, and but that Heaven
Has mercy for the merciful, had fallen
Before ten times our number.

AZUBAH.

Asahel was not harmed?

OTHNIEL. Nor any: and our sylvan trophies bear
Good witness for us. Nay, my pretty playfellow
Look not so sad.

HADASSAH.

'Tis cruelty to chase

Such timid wretches, and because man has
 The strength to harm them, to exert that strength.
 Would I could bind your arrows with a curse,
 Unstring your bow with direct malediction,
 And anathematize your javelin.
 Some woeful day will see you borne along
 Helpless and wounded ; or, beneath some dark
 Impending precipice, mangled, and bleaching
 In the cold winds of heaven, will you lie
 For gorging vultures.

JEPHTHAH. God be between us and such day of grief.
 Light be our lives, and easy be our deaths
 As of the game we feed on. Love's terror, girl,
 Is but an unschooled reasoner.—Ammonites
 So near to us ?

OTHNIEL. Not in o'ermastering strength,
 But predatory parties, speck the distant,
 Almost extinct horizon. ' But for our chase
 They might not have been noticed.

JEPHTHAH. Warily
 Hold we our 'vantage. The sailing eagle eyes
 From the splintered crest his spoiler. Ammon may
 Dare much in despite, and dare not we the less
 In our defence. Fare ye well, my children,
 You with your joys, I with a chieftain's duty
 Exhilarate our early meeting.

AZUBAH. I, to my distaff,
It's keen reproaches ring within my ears.

JEPHTHAH AND AZUBAH, *pass out.*

OTHNIEL. The choicest joy,
Joy overpowering all other joys
As the sun dims the starlight, welcomes in
This day of happiness. As upon this day
Our infant hands were joined : as upon this day,
Year after year has affection's fervid prayer
Re-sanctified our betrothal ; and but one more,
Oh why one more long period of impatience ?
And I shall hold thee, by a husband's right
Mine, mine for ever.

HADASSAH. And for ever yours,
For ever mine. We are too happy, Othniel.

OTHNIEL. If happiness could be distinct from lovely
Angelic virtues, then indeed were happiness
Too great for thee. If that my darkness were
A faint reflection of thy purest light,
Thy fixed, thy calm, intense, beatific light,
Ill should I deem all human happiness
Too great for my enjoyment : yet mercy,
Tempers even bliss to man's capacity
Of endurance, and perfect bliss were too,
Too far exalted for the human mind

To bear, and to hold it's faculties. Still I bless
This happiest day and could for ever live
In it's foreshadowing.

HADASSAH. May God look down in mercy,
And pour upon us so much mingled bliss
And trial, as shall bear us, unharmed on
To the life of our forefathers: there to live
In rapturous worship, and in rapturous labour
To enhance each other's bliss, and to increase
His honour who has made us. Would that, Othniel,
Would that poor outcast Israel, would return
In penitence to him.

OTHNIEL. Would say you, dearest girl,
My sister-wife: would, would that Israel
Would turn in penitence?—If erring fame
Fable not past all redemption, Israel
Yet crying in terror, and with ashes strewn
Upon ashes, grovelling implore of him,
Pardon and pity.—We but indistinctly hear,
As we are here cut off, kept separate,
And unpolluted by communion with
The vile idolater: we indistinctly hear
The sore oppression by the Ammonite,
The sore oppression by the Philistine;
And eighteen years of bitterest degradation
Have even but now so subdued them that they have
cried.
The indignant prophets, holy in their anger,

Have turned from them in wrath, and bidden them
cry
To the bestial gods they chose.

HADASSAH.

Yet, O, Lord God !

Thou wilt not burn in vengeance until the earth
Shall wither : Thou wilt still, in compassion, hear
My poor, poor country ; thy own little one,
The child of thy own bosom.

OTHNIEL.

Be it so.——

They stood aghast. Pestilence, and misery
Stalked glaring, and upon thousands, thousands
fell ;
Famine gnawed upon famine, and death, throned,
Sole monarch sate.—The brazen serpent saved
All who looked on in faith : so, in agony
Looked they and lived. As the big, scalding tear
Of streaming penitence, implored for mercy
Compassion stooped from heaven. They burst the
bonds,
They hurled down Chemosh, hurled fell Moloch
down
To welter in his own fire.—To the wide
Rejoicing winds they scattered Ashtaroth,
Priest-throned, impure, revolting Queen of Heaven,
So named in insensate, vain idolatry :
Threw down their altars, to the abhorring sun
Revealed the secrets of their sacred groves,
And while wan Ammon, in his wrath restrained,

Looked on in utter astonishment, they slew
 The required victims, purified themselves,
 And worshipped the Lord God, the only God :
 And he has heard them.

HADASSAH.

Ever may he hear
 Their heart-felt thankfulness. This is indeed a day,
 Of joy and of rejoicing. Israel has awakened
 To his dire sinfulness : Israel has awakened
 To purifying penitence—Israel has awakened
 To sanctifying peace. My loved, loved country !
 The mother cannot gloat upon her child,
 The bridegroom cannot triumph in his bride,
 As I rejoice over thee.

OTHNIEL.

Yet be advised.

All this is said : but blear uncertainty
 Yet darkens the intelligence : await
 In confiding hope it's truth,—

With rent garments,
 With sackcloth on their loins, earth on their heads,
 Whence are these suppliants ?

OTHNIEL AND HADASSAH *retire*, JEPHTHAH *enters*, *followed by* ITHRA, GALEED, AND MATTATHA, (*Elders of Gilead*) *and accompanied by* ASAHIEL.

JEPHTHAH. I never injured one of Gilead's sons,
 High Heaven forbid that e'er my father's house

Should fear despite or injury from me.
There lies your way.

ITHRA. We acknowledge all :
We own our fault, and seek to expiate
Our foul offence.

JEPHTHAH. And therefore come ye to espy me out,
To make a record of my wonted haunts,
To mark the value of the spoil I fought for,
And boldly gained from Ammon?—For this ye come,
Under the glozing semblance of abasement ;
And bend and cringe, that when ye see advantage,
High towering over Jephthah, ye may strike,
And crush him. For this goodly end ye come.

MATTATHA. By the King of Heaven !—

JEPHTHAH. Traitors swear glibly. Could I believe
 your oaths,
I, who from you each bitterest wrong endured,
Made keener by the sense of my dependence ?
 Ye could praise my form,
Ye could caress me, could recount my deeds,
Repeat my prattle, while my father lived,
For that ye knew his love expected it.
Scarcely the blessing he implored upon me,
Grew cold upon his faltering, lifeless lip,
Ere ye could gather courage to insult,
To taunt, to scoff : and, lest the puny rage

Of boyhood's indignation should outbreak,
 Ye forced me, homeless, from my father's home.—
 Go, ask the wildest bird that cleaves the sky
 With rapid wing ; go, ask the fiercest beast
 Which ever drove his offspring from his lair
 If those who injure ever come to beg.

ITHRA.

We acknowledge all.

Heap, heap it doubled, tripled, upon our heads,
 Our sinful heads. We sinned most grievously,
 And that, our grievous crime, in wrath returns.—
 The scorpion-scourge of dire necessity
 Has driven us, cowering, to implore that aid
 Which we so vilely, cruelly denied
 To an orphan.— Gilead not alone
 Sues now for mercy : all Manasseh's sons
 Implore.

JEPHTHAH.

Which of Manasseh's sons

Gave me a home when your inhuman outrage
 Drove me through storm and whirlwind to seek out
 And hope to find the lion in his hunger
 More gentle than a brother? They with you
 Hunted me down. Each galling epithet
 Whose force, whose meaning, I have learnt too
 dearly,
 Was lavished upon me. Not alone reviling
 My mother,—for she was a mother to me,
 Although foul sin had driven her to seek
 The bread of shame—No, not alone reviling

My mother, but my princely father's name
Branding with infamy, they hurled it all
Upon my devoted head. Shall I then stoop
Now that the hand of God hath set me up,
Given me wealth, given me earthly power,
And made me greatest of that father's house?

GALEED. I, Jephthah, beg.

JEPHTHAH. Thou art my elder brother.

GALEED. Elder by birth, much elder in demerit,
Elder in crime, in all that can debase
And make man vile, I, elder am to you,
Much younger in all else.

JEPHTHAH. You flatter masterlike.

GALEED. We come from Gilead: we are sorely distressed,
Robbed of all hope, hopeless of all repose
But in the bosom of our outcast brother.

JEPHTHAH. Well ye affect the utterance of distress.

ITHRA. We speak as nature prompts us, in reply
To censures, just and righteous that they are,
Yet harsh, yet bitter, made more poignant still
By conscience pouring venom through their teeth.

ASAHEL. This indignation does but bear thee on
Beyond the bound of reason.

JEPHTHAH, Does Asahel,
Plead for oppressors? !

ASAHEL. Nay, but I use the privilege of friendship,
And soothe my chieftain when he acts unkindly.

JEPHTHAH. They heeded not when, in that cruel night,
I was cast out a homeless wanderer,

ASAHEL. As to the august progenitor of our tribe
Whose brethren knelt in terror at his feet ;
These tyrants now are grovelling at your feet,
Whose outrage has been made the instrument
Of God to exalt you.

JEPHTHAH. I owe them nought,

ASAHEL. All owe commiseration
To all. This their too foul offence
As it depresses them, enhances but more
Your pity.

JEPHTHAH. When, by severe experience, you, who know
not
Aught but of noblest natures, shall have discerned
That foul deceit with fragrant poison tips
Her insidious barb, I then will waive my judgment,

But, for these men.—Return ye to your homes.

GALEED. How can we face our wives, our little ones?

Dread God of Heaven! in mercy to our misery,
Bid pitying earth open her marble jaws
And swallow us.—We have sinned, have sinned,
Have sinned most bitterly—and, Thou art just.

ITHRA. When impious Ammon bare away our flocks,
Stopped up our wells, poisoned our rivulets,
Ravaged our fields, expelled us of our homes,
Righteous expulsion for we cast thee out ;
Drove us to dig, for refuge, in the earth
Holes, dens, and caves: when, when their ferocity
Tare from the mother's breast her darling one,
The child of her old age, her only one,
And dashed the brains out—to the shrieks and
moans
Of childless matrons, of bereaved sires,
All we could answer, was—our brother Jephthah.

JEPHTHAH. And, in return for all I could achieve,
Ye would surprize me in the deep sleep of night,
And bind me, and deliver me to Ammon.
This would ye do, and buy your safety with it.

GALEED. Oaths, prayers, and protestations,
Cannot efface the stigma which we bear
Most justly.—Far, far as men could suffer
With stern endurance we could firmly bear

Nor shrink one nerve :—but when our virgins' cries,
 When infant wailings, when the weak moans of age,
 All night, all day, for wearying months and years,
 Pierce through us : when, stretched upon the couch
 Of feverish, restless, wan, inquietude,
 Just sinking, from exhaustion, into slumber,
 Our wretched haunts glare in the hostile flame ;
 They must be far, far less than degraded men
 That could refuse to bow.

JEPHTHAH.

I have endured all this ;

Have lien for weeks upon the frozen earth,
 And Gilead's sons would not vouchsafe a look
 On the starving outcast ; nor will he on them.—
 Nay, speak no more : I have been taught by you
 To shut my ears to woe and lamentation :
 And I could imitate the hideous yell,
 The demon howl, the fiendish execration,
 The hell-born laughter ; but that I should scorn
 To crush a wounded reptile. Go in peace.

ITHRA. Poor, poor Manasseh ! wretchedness and
 death

Are all thy own.

MATTATHA.

We must endure it firmly,

And, when the worst of misery shall arrive,
 Can but destroy our offspring and ourselves,
 And leave dead bodies for the lust of Ammon.

HADASSAH. My father !

JEPHTHAH. Retire, retire, obey me instantly.

HADASSAH. Alas, my father ! until this dreadful hour
I never knew a scene of misery.

JEPHTHAH. Go—go—

HADASSAH. You never frowned upon me,
Nor have I ever offended you.—My father !—
Was—was it my father spake unadvisedly ?

Our great lawgiver, blessed be his remembrance,
Bade us befriend the helpless and the stranger,
Even to help the Egyptian, in his distress,
For that we were bond-men in the Egyptian's land.—
Strangers have claims upon our earnest pity,
Strangers are in God's own safeguard, pleading in
The voice of God.—Forgive me, oh my father—
We all come strangers into this chill world,
Where then had been thou, I, and all around,
Had strangers not found welcome, had not some
Kind bosom cherished us ?

JEPHTHAH. These were no strangers, girl,
Had they not rudely snapped affection's bonds
And made themselves estranged.—These are the
men
Who once could make a merit of feigned affection

And call me, brother : fraternity in hatred
Is all the tie of blood now. They loathed me,
As I now reject them.—There lies your way.

HADASSAH. Our childless forefather, for the guilty
cities,

As friend to friend, dared speak before his Creator,
Shall not I plead to man?—My father, oh my
father !

Why is this trembling ? grasp me not so harshly,
Nay, turn not thus away.—I am your child ;
And though I brave your anger, yet I am
Your true, your trustful, your affectionate child ;
And, though you slew me, my departing soul
Would be your child's.—Remember, oh, my father !
Thou wast a stranger.

JEPHTHAH.

Stranger, rejected, spurned,
Cursed, spit upon,—Yes, I was made a stranger,
And the stark wilderness was a fonder brother
Than my fond father's children.—Go in peace—
Go—go in peace.

HADASSAH.

And the sweet peace of Heaven
Shall spring up in your soul, if only, only you add,
Come, come in peace.—My father !—in my prayers,
When I could just but lisp the holy name,
When I sat, wondering, on the dear, loved knees
I now grasp imploringly, and followed your
Uplifted gaze, and marked the deep-blue sky

Gemmed with the glowing stars, you bade me say,
 God bless my father—God bless my kind, kind
 friends—

God bless my enemies :—Did you not then forgive
 Your enemies, my father?—Nay, struggle not,
 Tear not away your hand.

JEPHTHAH.

Rise,—rise,

HADASSAH. I would not only rise : with heaven-ward
 spring

I would clasp around my father's neck, and devour-
 ingly

Kiss off those gushing tears.—If God should bid,

If God should bid thee, by an angel's voice,

To do some great deed, would'st thou not do it?

If God should bid thee in his rugged path

To walk, would'st thou not walk? If God should
 say

These are my children ; love them : could'st thou
 not love them?—

These are God's children : they have turned to him,
 And God has turned to them. Wilt not thou turn?

Wilt not thou follow where God treads before thee?

JEPHTHAH. They are apostates.

HADASSAH.

They were apostates.

Oh, that we all could look into our bosoms

And find no stain of apostacy within

Our secret, secret, souls!—Bear with me, oh my
father!

As God has borne with them,—bear, bear with them
As God has borne with thee,—and, oh forgive
As thou shalt hope, as thou would'st be thyself
Forgiven.———God has forgiven them :
I know, I feel it.—Suppliants though they be,
Robed as they are in wretchedness, defiled
With dust and ashes ; yet, their manly bearing
Asserts that they are forgiven ; consciously
They tread as new-born men, as men free-born,
Free-born in God's pure love. Shall God's own
freed-man

Plead to a free-born man, and no responsive string
Vibrate within him ? Oh, forbid it, Heaven !—
God of my fathers ! bid my father be .
A father to his brethren.—Oh, my honoured father !
These are our brethren : we have one common
father,
Are of one tribe, one nation, adore one God.—
Think, think, my father ; Ammon's iron scourge
This eighteen years has torn, has tortured them.
Fearless and proud, made insolent in strength,
Unchecked, and unrestrained, they even now
Gather around our home :

JEPHTHAH.

They dare as soon assail
The battlements of heaven :

HADASSAH.

While that God holds

His bridle in their jaws :—be that unloosed,
In some dread, maddened moment, hot with wine,
Enarmed with Moloch's blood-stained, burning
brands

Their ferocious legions yet may test your strength.
True, you are strong ; true, your resounding fame
Holds their fierce king in check : but, sinking in old
age,

Stricken down, and smitten, languid with disease,
Could Jephthah strive for ever ?—Oh, I could beg,
Outweary you with strenuous supplication ;
Could say that, even yet, my father may need,
Renowned, glorious, prosperous as he is,
The succour he denies : could strongly picture,
His treasures pillaged, his defenceless child,
When Othniel, and when Jephthah are far off,
For ye are brave, and fearless of surprise ;
Borne off by Ammon. Oh, I could tell him too,
His name, abhorred, would reek in future time
Should he for personal, private wrong desert
His writhing country. Oh, I could tell him,
Could tell him, could he impiously, ungratefully,
Withstand the holy impulse which even now
Fiercely burns within his ardent, stedfast gaze,
And sits defiant upon his firm-set lip,
That God needs not the energy of Jephthah
To save his agonized children.—God can call
From out this hard earth, instantaneously,
Ten thousand thousand legions to avenge
His chosen ;—but the love of Heaven selects

Thy brilliant weapons—Thou art God's chosen
chief—

Go, in the strength of God—Hew down God's foes—
Be, be thou, God's glorious conqueror.—

JEPHTHAH.

To my heart,

My bleeding, bursting, yearning, yearning heart,
Come, come, my brethren.—

Hadassah! thou

Hast conquered. In thy thrall of gentleness
Thou holdest no gentle spirit.

ITHRA. This, this shall be a day of gratulation,

A day of holy joy, kept festival,

And sanctified to future time—Hail—Hail to thee,
Chief!

Hail, to thee, Angel! Unborn years shall be
Rich in thy praise.

HADASSAH.

And wealthy shall ye be

In Him toward whom your erring feet have turned.

So shall ye fight, as never yet men fought,

So shall ye conquer, as never yet men conquered,

So shall ye triumph, as never yet men triumphed.

Before you, as the fragile, quivering leaves

Are whirled by the tempest's breath, your enemies

Shall flee: Gilead the loud-resounding threshing-
floor,

Ammon the refuse chaff.—Be but his people,

And he will be your guide, your chief, your God.

JEPHTHAH. As ye have said: say, do ye straitly
swear

Here, in the presence of that God, whose might
Smote Egypt, and led Israel through the drear
And howling wilderness; who ever heads
Israel's blithe band, shall be proud Gilead's head?

ITHRA. We have so said: and we do straitly swear
Here, in the presence of that God, whose might
Smote Egypt, and led Israel through the drear
And howling wilderness; if thou shalt head
Israel's blithe band, thou shalt be Gilead's head.

JEPHTHAH. So do the God of Heaven, to me and
mine

As I discharge my duty faithfully,
Towards God and man. I will be Gilead's head,
Will be to Gilead, father, brother, friend;
Gilead to me be fathers, brethren, friends,
And woe to him that severs this our union.

Othniel! Asahel! ere the noontide hour
We march towards Mizpeh. Bid our ready bands
Heed not to leave their wives and children here.
God's terror shall keep watch around their heads;
Chariots and horsemen of avenging fire
Shall walk around them incessantly.—

My child !

My dear, devoted, enthusiastic child !
Pride of my youth and glory of my manhood,
Light, life, and lustre of this dearly-loved home,
Thy nerves must now be strung.

HADASSAH.

Whatever task

God calls his creatures to, he fits them for,
And the timid, powerless woman, in his strength
Becomes a dauntless giant. Deborah
Might lead when Barak quailed.

[*They all pass out.*]

THE COUNCIL.

JEPHTHAH, ITHRA, GALEED, MATTATHA.

ASAHEL enters.

JEPHTHAH. Thou hast borne thy message?

ASAHEL. Thus have I said.—

Jephthah the son of Gilead, and the chosen head
Of Israel's warriors, thus has said to Ammon.

"Why hast thou ventured to invade my land
And striven to fight against me?"—Ammon has
said,

"Because that Israel, in his lawless might
Fleeing from Egypt's bonds, overran my land
From Arnon even unto Jabbok; now, in peace,
Let him restore the lands of which he robbed me."

Now Jephthah unto Ammon thus replies.

“ Israel robbed neither Moab, nor yet Ammon,
But when he brake from the Egyptian’s tyranny,
And, in the might of the Lord God of Hosts,
Honoured and blessed be that holy name,
The Red Sea rolled his trembling waters back
On either hand, and, through the wilderness,
His foot had trodden until he reached the limit
Of Kadesh, then did Israel send in peace
To his brother Edom, saying, let me pass
Straight through thy borders : Edom flatly refused
Though he was Israel’s brother. Then Israel spake
To Moab : Moab’s proud king, haughtily
Sent back the messengers, in scorn. So Israel,
Respecting their sovereignty, and the tie of blood
Remembering, on his wearied feet held onward
And skirted around Edom’s land, and Moab,
Passing by the Eastern side, and trespassing not
One moment within their borders, but encamping
On the other side of Arnon, Moab’s extreme limit.
Then Israel sent to Sihon, king of the Amorites
In his seat at Heshbon, asking frankly,
As equals ask of equals, leave to pass
Through the Amorite’s land to his appointed rest.
Mistrustful Sihon collected an armed host,
Pitched in Jahaz, and presumptuously
Began the battle : but the insulted Lord God
Beat down his strength, bound fast the unrighteous
one

And gave him, helpless, into Israel's hand :
And Israel took, and holds, all that the Amorite
Before time held, even from Arnon's vale
Northward to Jabbok, and from the wilderness
Westward to Jordan, a good land, and a large,
A land of fruits, a land of luxuriant vines,
And keeps it as his inalienable right.
Israel robbed thee not. God gave to him the spoil
And rooted out the Amorite,—Would'st thou
Possess it ? Would'st not thou possess
Whatever thy god Chemosh could confer ?
And so will Israel, pertinaciously,
And resolutely hold, whatever land
The dread Lord God, who alone can give or take,
Shall give to him, whatever be the nation
He shall drive out before him.—Ammon, art thou
Stronger than Balak, the renowned son
Of Zippor, king of Moab ? Can'st thou force
Another Balaam to curse but the utmost edge
Of Israel's host, when God shall bid him, perforce,
And despite of his rebellious will, to bless them ?
Did ever Moab within the three hundred years
Since Israel dwelt in Heshbon and her towns,
In Aroer and her towns, and in all the cities
Of the coast of Arnon, ever re-claim the land
Or ever strive to re-conquer it ?—If it were not
God given, why during those three hundred years
Did'st thou submit ? Why didst thou not, in thy
daring,

Recover them?—I have not sinned against thee,
 I claim the land as mine, and this thy war
 Against me is most unjust.—Thou, the wrong-doer
 Complainest of my wrong.—Within my hands
 I place my life. The righteous Lord, the Judge,
 Be judge this day between Israel and Ammon :
 Retire thou from my land :—”

So, unreservedly,
 Gave I thy plain-spoken message.

JEPHTHAH. Does Ammon yield?
 Does he recede from his unrighteous claim?

ASAHEL. Grinding his teeth, and gnashing in his rage,
 No answer he vouchsafed. War, determined war,
 No child's game, but relentless, unsparing war
 Spake, though his tongue lacked words.

JEPHTHAH. Then War, War, War,
 Shall be our battle-cry. We offered the peace
 Of Justice, in our fearlessness. Since that Ammon
 Rejects the offer, War to the extremity—
 Elders and brethren, say, have I counselled well?

MATTATHA. Were Ammon, but, on the instant, in my
 gripe.

GALEED. Jephthah ! we came to thee as men resolved
 Dearly to sell our lives, or dearly to buy

Our liberty. We stood like gaze-hounds in the
leash,

Ardent to hunt down oppression, and to shew
How far beyond endurance we have been galled.
We but restrained our eagerness, in respect
To thee.—Thou, in thy generosity, hast offered
Safe-conduct to our foe-man: would'st give him,
Law,

That we might run a fair chase at his heels :
But we would tear him down 'ere his fleet foot
Had started.—Lead us—lead us quickly on :
We need no respite, know no fatigue, revenge
Has armed us to the teeth, and rankling hatred
Adds wings to our impatience.—Onward—on, on.

ITHRA. Courage lacks constancy, sedatest valour
Takes counsel with staid wisdom. Not less in
hatred,

Nay in more resolved hatred, more defined,
More calculating hatred, Ithra adds
His voice to all your voices. All that I counsel
Is cool, determined, strict, subserviency
To our experienced leader. As he shall step
Step we ; as he shall shout, shout we ; as he shall
strike,

In the extremest weight of all our vengeance, strike
Our weapons. In the justice of our cause
Fight we like men, not maniacs. Knit close
In body, heart, and soul ; compacted as one,
In God's might let us march, so God shall be

Our vanguard and our rere-ward.

JEPHTHAH.

Asahel !

With Othniel head our march. My household
friends,

Stark warriors, and resolved, burn for the fight.

Guarded by them, dear unto each of them

As his own or his chieftain's life, my daughter shall
cheer,

And urge on their full speed. At Mizpach
Of Gilcad we shall meet.

My brethren !

We as one man march on, gathering our strength

As vultures gather vultures to the feast.

Onward, then onward.—In the cause of God,

Of Israel, and of Gilcad, onward, onward.

[*They all pass out.*]

* * * * *

MIZPEH OF GILEAD.

KALED, PENINAH, AND VIRGINS.

PENINAH. Generous and merciful,
Oh how unlike his guilty persecutors
Is my noble boy.

VIRGIN. And lovely Hadassah,
Before whose footsteps halcyon morning blushes,
And mid-day brightness kindless at her gaze.

PENINAH. Glad Fame has decked her with the glorious
hues

Of ministering angels in their joy.
 Jephthah's bold spirit, tempered by a seraph,
 Glows in a female bosom. He, the meteor-fire
 Streaming athwart the tempest; she the evening-
 star
 Brilliant in the sun's effulgence.—Age has cramped,
 And benumbed my spirit, but the flush of youth
 Informs me, as I dwell upon the scene
 Hope decks so gorgeously.

MAHUDATHA *enters.*

MAHUDATHA. And the outraged boy
 In manhood will not meditate revenge?
 Go hide within your narrow, loathsome dens,
 Dig deep within the bowels of the earth,
 Beg safety from the cold, relentless rock.—

PENINAH. And charity from the coward's slanderous
 tongue.
 Out on thee, wretch; vile, venomous, yelping cur,
 Snapping at the horse-hoofs, but fleeing howling
 from
 The bull's bold front.

HADASSAH AND OTHNIEL *enter.*

ALL. Heaven save Hadassah!

Lovingly we kiss your foot-prints, noble lady,
Gilead's fair princess, Israel's glorious hope.

HADASSAH. Rise, rise, I entreat you, as my joyous
heart

Cries, welcome, unto all ; or, grovelling in the dust
I must bow down. I do but come to you,
A hostage for my father's fealty,
A happy harbinger of victory,
Yet ye receive me as a conqueror.

PENINAH. And Jephthah comes not to his boyhood's
home :

And Jephthah prays not where his father prayed :
And Jephthah, overflowing in his gratitude
Praises not here, upon the guilty threshold
Which clave not into fragments when he fled,
The God which has returned him to his home
In prosperous safety ?—It is not well, my Jephthah !
Peninah would have died rejoicingly
Had she but seen her Jephthah kneeling here.

HADASSAH. Weep not, nay weep not ; base ingratitude
And Jephthah are not of kin. This his loved home
Shall welcome him a glorying conqueror :
Here shall he bless the God of his forefathers,
Here shall he bless him, as, in his purest love
And superabounding gratitude, I kiss thee
My honoured, my revered, unknown, yet dearly
cherished,

My loved, loved benefactress. Warmer heart
Has not Peninah for her foster-child,
Than has my father for his foster-mother.

PENINAH. But one more pleasure has my God to give.
My child's fair fame stands nobly vindicated,
I have seen his child: even the bliss of heaven
Scarcely can overpass such happiness.

THE PEOPLE (*without*). Blessing and honour, ever
wait upon thee:
Be glory and glad remembrance thy reward:
Bravest among the bravest; who hast heard
And answered. The great, the merciful God
Forgive us, and bless thee.

JEPHTHAH, ASAHIEL, ITHRA, MATTATHA, GALEED, AND
OTHERS, *enter*.

JEPHTHAH. God of my fathers! severe and terrible,
God of my fathers! kind and merciful,
The One, the True, the Holy! here I entreat
Pardon for all my waywardness, for vice,
For crime, for deadly sin.—Here, here abased,
I beg, I implore for pardon. As I do, freely,
And from my inmost soul forgive all men,
And utterly blot out from my memory
All sense of anger, me do Thou forgive.
Here, standing in my father's foot-prints, I,

The foster-child of thy own providence,
Praise thee, and bless thee, honour thee, adore thee,
For mercies, each transcending my desert
As thou transcendest empty nothingness ;
For dark, mysterious mercies, chastisements,
Which have scourged me into thy own righteous
path,

And made me what I am, and raised me up
To be a benefactor to my loved
My honoured father's house ; to be the centre,
The rallying point of Gilead, of Manasseh,
The Standard of a just warfare. Here, before thee,
Here, upon the sacred threshold of my home,
The home of my forefathers, I renew
My sacred pledge. Here, I, advisedly,
Reiterate my oath to lead thy people,
As thou shalt smile upon our enterprise,
To victory, to freedom. O ! do thou,
God of our fathers ! severe and terrible,
God of our fathers ! kind and merciful,
So prosper us, as we are true to thee.

KALED. Old age has bleared my sight, but I can recognize,

That ardent voice. Lead me, Peninah, lead me
That I may die, in pleasure, at his feet.

JEPHTHAH. Not die, but live ; but live until extreme
age

Shall lead us both to the grave. No, no, good Kaled !
 Jephthah is no death-messenger ; his life
 Richly were recompensed in giving thee
 A century of new life. Come, good old man,
 Come, my kind foster-mother to my arms,
 Lean your heads on my bosom that our tears
 May mingle richly as our wonted joys.

KALED. I do not see thee, but I feel thy strong,
 Thy vigorous arm ; I feel thy bounding heart
 Throb as 'twould leap into mine. The God of
 Heaven,
 Our father's God, pour gladly upon thee
 The wealth of heaven, the treasures of the earth :
 Thy enemies bow down beneath thy feet,
 Thy brethren glory in thy glorious greatness,
 Gilead, Manasseh, Israel, swell thy praise.

PENINAH. And, oh that these glad tears
 Were each a blessing, richer than the dews
 Of Hermon and of Carmel.—When the sighs,
 The tears, the groans, the shrill, the torturing
 shrieks
 The desperation, and the frantic agony
 Of sinking Israel rose :—When cruel Ammon
 To torture added torture, to revenge
 Added revenge, to insult added insult,
 Devising day by day, and year by year,
 Re-refined torments :—Even when all sunk
 Exhausted beneath the exhaustion of their fiend—

—Incarnated skill :—Even when prophet, priest,
And seer fell down abashed ; then it was, that I,
Deemed mad, deemed doting, deemed a pestilent
curse,

Still shouted the curse of God, upon their gods,
And rang in their ears, of slow-footed, but resolved,
Relentless, retribution : and, they turned,
They turned to God, and God returned to them :
They turned to Jephthah, Jephthah returned to
them,

And my chilled heart grew warm ; my frozen limbs
Bounded with youthful vigour ; for I knew,
My boy would not degenerate from his blood,
Nor shame the milk that nourished him : and, I am
proud,

Proud, prouder than the eagle when the sun
Is bathed in by her eaglet, and he sails away
In his own, independent might.—Dear as to me
Art thou ; dear as to thee, thy child ; dear as to her
The life-blood of her heart ; so dear to all
Be all.—In consanguinity,

Children of one—of one as good as dead,
Children of one—the promised, the given heir,
Children of one—the elected of his God,
Children of Jacob, Isaac, Abraham ;
March onward in your fierceness. Strike them
down,

Destroy, root up, crush the idolators.

JEPHTHAH.

Were the impending strife
 For spoil, for fame, for conquest, I should shrink
 In terror thus to leave thee, my fair child,
 The pride, the hope, the stay, the consolation,
 Of every sorrow, every toil, of every wild
 Enthusiastic vision, of every pleasure
 That binds his offspring to a parent's heart :
 But, righteous is my cause, asserting the right,
 Defending the defenceless, sternly avenging
 Wrong upon wrong, and to the utterance
 Defying those who, impiously, have defied,
 Insulted, and contemned the Lord God ;
 Even in the midst of Ammon's throng, thou wert
 Safe as at heaven's gate, and rejoicing cherub-hosts
 Were a wall of fire around thee. Confidingly
 I leave thee in the care of him, whose shield
 Shadows the orphan.—Fare thee well, my child :
 Glad, golden days of glorious happiness,
 Of plenteous exuberance in all Israel's love
 And veneration await thee.

HADASSAH.

Fare thee, fare thee well.

In the same holy confidence I quit
 Thus thy paternal bosom. In the might
 Of God thou marchest, in his victorious might
 Gladsome be thy return.—Fare, fare thee well.

ALL. God of our fathers ! save us in thy mercy,
 God of our fathers ! sanctify their valour,

God of our fathers ! grant them victory.

JEPHTHAH, ASAHIEL, AND THE ELDERS *pass out.*

OTHNIEL *remains.*

HADASSAH. Farewell, yes, fare thee well.—Yet,
Othniel ! -

There is a rebel spirit in my bosom
Whispering of danger, struggling against my strong
hope,
And choking my conviction.—I shall not hear his
prayer,

I shall not hear his evening benediction ;
And in the drear, dread silence of the night
Dreams of sad import may assail me.—Othniel !
In that drear, dreadful silence, pray that my soul
May not shrink from her duty.—At that lone,
That weary hour, upon yon star in the zenith,
I will gaze fixedly, and thou wilt gaze
Thereon, and we shall bless, and strengthen,
And pray the one for the other ; looking upon
One glorious object in God's deep, dark sky,
And there our eyes shall meet in one glad hope.

OTHNIEL. The ever blessed, the ever-wakeful host
Of kindred spirits keep their steadiest watch
Around thee. May their balmy, argent wings
Fan you into tranquil slumber, and hope, and joy,
Hail your glad welcome of the roseate morn.

Fear not, nay fear not.

HADASSAH.

All is most strange around.

Those trees, yon hill, have never welcomed me
At morning's rise, at evening's setting ray,
Nor seen me lingering to greet the stars'
First twinkle in the glowing firmament :
And a strange sadness, sadness so strange as to seem
Ominous of evil days, broods over me.—
If in the strife of battle—if in the strife—
Where it is thickest, and where thou and my father
Are certain to be found, some furious foe
Should aim at our father's life,—be thou—
Oh be thou, Othniel ! as a second Providence
To save him.

OTHNIEL. So do the God of Heaven to me, and more,
If I desert him. In our heaviest strife
Our prayers will both be for Hadassah's safety.
Hadassah's prayers will draw down angels to combat
In legioned strength around us.—Fare thee well—
The God of Heaven guard thee :—resolutely
I must flee from thee :—fare thee, fare thee well.

HADASSAH. Fare—fare thee well.—Thus am I left
alone

Without a friend to listen to my sorrows,
Without a kindly bosom to respond to,
Or to cheer me in my anxiety.—Alone,

Mournful, depressing thought—Alone—

PENINAH. Though chilled, though seared by age, by
misery,

Yet can we feel the throb of gratitude,
Yet can we answer in benignity
And love, to her, in whom love and benignity
Sit throned.

HADASSAH. All my visionary hope
Is now one blank.

PENINAH. Where gladness and victory,
Shall paint in living colours scenes of bliss.
Eager with hope, in dim futurity
I saw his glory : now, it's airy volumes
Are tinged with light, and life, and certainty.
Blithe, honied, music, wafted on the thankful,
The fragrant incense of a nation's prayers
Precedes thy halcyon dawn of happiness.

HADASSAH. So heaven permit !

* * * * *

THE MARCH.

JEPHTHAH AND WARRIORS.

JEPHTHAH.

So has our speed

Been well sustained, and secret ; and we but breathe
For the impetuous onset. Well have ye all
As to one purpose fixed, held steadily
The onward course from Gilead, traversing
Manasseh unto Mizpeh, passing Mahanaim,
And overleaping Jabbok, as a rill,
At Peniel—blessed be our father's strife
When there he wrestled as a mighty prince
And prevailed against God's angel.—Here, from the
heights

Of Ramath, gazing on the joyous plain
Rich in it's clustering vineyards ; far and wide,
Ammon's black tents pierce through the morning
 mist,
Safe in their conscious strength, and, scornfully
 scorning
The oppressed slaves vengeance.—Othniel !
Veiled by yon curling mist-wreath, lead thy force
Under the shadow of the Eastern mountains
Ere the, now level, sun beams gild the vale,
Far southward as to Rabbath ; and when our shout
Of battle arises from Aroer, rapidly
Fall upon their flank. Touch not, nor food, nor
 spoil,
No prisoner make, but hew them as they have hewn
God's heritage.—So speed thee—

Asahel !—

He is not wont to be a laggard riser
When the game is on the wing.—Ho ! Asahel !—

GALEED AND MATTATHA *enter, with* ELROTHAN.

GALEED. Chieftains, all hail !—May this our earnest
 be

A goodly omen of success.—The earliest dawn
'Ere the owl had slunk to rest, has given us
Far goodlier game than we sought. Say, infidel,
What errand aroused you earlier than the sun ?

ELROTHAN. Ten thousand thousand curses blast thee,
wretch,

That liest thus ! Call you these crawling vermin,
These famished dogs, these lurking, slinking slaves,
Who only can creep peeping from their dens
While night can save them, Gilead's mighty chief-
tains ?

By all the gods ! I cannot find a man
Among this mockery of nature's lords.
Are these your chiefs ? Fit chiefs, fit warriors.

MATTATHA. Have Ammon's women tutored thee ? Thy
tongue

Cries shame upon thy sword. Curb in that weapon,
Or I shall teach thee patience.

ELROTHAN. False, hunger-eaten cur !
Patience !—Elrothan sullies his renown
By looking on thee, vile Egyptian hound.

JEPHTHAH. We but waste patience ;—greater were thy
renown

Than of Balak the son of Zippor : were it greater
Than thy tongue-valour, Manasseh sets thee free.—
Go, tell the king of Ammon's locust-swarm,
'Ere thy winged speed can scarcely have conveyed
Our bold defiance, Jephthah follows thee.
Look to thy safety.

ELROTHAN. Thou Jephthah ? thou ?

Thou the bold son of Gilcad ? Thou the man
That hast held Ammon at defiance ? Thou ?—
No, I disdain thy bidding. Bear it thyself
If derision do not daunt thee, gigantic chief
Among pigmies.

ASAHEL *enters*.

ASAHEL. In the name of God, lead on.
Mine eyes have seen them siezing upon their spears
Impatient for the assault. Fame has flown swifter
Than our precipitous speed, and Jephthah's name
Has added myriads to our numbers. They are
daunted.

ELROTHAN. Liar and slave !

ASAHEL. Slave ?—Liar ?—

JEPHTHAH. The intemperate tongue
Does but defile itself. Haste with thy news.

ASAHEL. I have heard their counsel. I have seen them
lead,
In the pride of youth, and beauty, and renown,
The eldest offspring of their rapacious king
To the blood-stained altar of Chemosh. I have seen
The impious father, in fanatic zeal,
Plunge deep in blood his suicidal hand

And smear the image of his devil-god.
 Stung with abhorrence, with my little band
 I dashed in the midst : we overthrew their idol,
 And seized their victim : swiftly to arms they flew
 And still press on.—

ELROTHAN. And has my god been cheated of his
 prey ;

And ye exult ?—Detested, accursed dogs !
 Whose God can only combat where the hills
 Wind their dark shadows around his coward head,
 Nor dare attack us where our thunderer
 In cloud and whirlwind rolls his iron car.
 Ye, ye exult ?—and think you that my god
 Shall want a victim ? Detested, accursed dogs !
 He shall not want a victim to excite
 His seven-fold rage : thick-steaming from the ground
 Rivers of blood shall lure him to the slaughter,
 And horror wither your effeminate souls,
 As thus I give him Ammon's princely gore

(Stabs himself,)

Curse, curse them, curse them, Chemosh ! curse them.

(Dies.)

JEPHTHAH. Dreadful—most horrible atrocity !

Oh, that my strength were as an angel armed,
 To sweep their thousands from the defiled earth.
 Give but, O God of Heaven ! to my sword
 These foul, these infamous idolaters,
 Give Israel his glut of vengeance—let me this once,

Let me this once deliver my loved country,
And I will sacrifice to thee whatever
Shall from my home first meet me—

Onward—onward—

The God of vengeance—the Lord God of Hosts
Terrify and overthrow them—on, on, on.

They rush out to the Battle.

* * * * *

MIZPEH OF GILEAD.

HADASSAH, PENINAH, MAACHAH, AND VIRGINS.

HADASSAH. And yet he comes not.—On the field of
death

Why dost thou linger?—Unwonted 'tis with thee
To satiate thine eye, in cruelty—

Why comest thou not?—The chilling dews of night
Hung heavily on me when, with straining eyes,
And in breathless agony, I, in vision, saw thee
Like the red whirlwind sweeping across the desert.
The gleaming lightning of thy plumed helm
Danced, as a meteor on the angry bosom

Of the vexed ocean. Slaughter and destruction
 Rolling their livid volumes, tinged with blood,
 Preceded, and the wasting pestilence,
 Wrapt in night's mantle, followed—

The avenging host

Circling thy banner, bounded in fury onward ;
 Tempest, and hail, and thunder winged with fire,
 Ploughed through the foe—the thick, the envenomed
 cloud

Shrank from thee, and a deadly rain of blood
 Tracked out thy pathway.—

Heaven, in secret heard me

Earnestly pray.—My still-imploing hands
 Sank not, fatigued : my still-entreating tongue
 Ceased not petitioning : my streaming eye,
 Glancing alternately towards Heaven and thee,
 Quenched not it's fervour, until I joyously saw thee
 Towering still foremost : low, beneath thy feet
 The neck of Ammon piteously outstretched,
 And Heaven's glad victory encircling thee.—
 And yet thou comest not.—

Envious heights !

Why do ye raise your threatening barriers
 To intercept me ? Cedars ! bow your heads,
 That, in the chequered intervals, my eyes
 May drink delight—

He comes not yet, Peninah.

PENINAH. Yet have they heard his cheerful trumpet-
 call.

HADASSAH.

Waits he yet

To count his loss?—He ever thus would wait
And last return; though I with fearful eyes
Longed to embrace him.—Othniel too arrives not—
He never stayed.—Pale, in his clotted blood
Perhaps he lies, and Jephthah mournfully
Bewails him.

PENINAH.

The last resounding note

Of the shrill trumpet scarcely has re-choed
From our deep defiles: the eagle's strenuous wing
Could not 'ere this have borne them.

HADASSAH.

Victory and affection

Had outstripped eagles.—Some deadly barb
Has drank my life-blood; and I, here lingering,
Staunch not their wounds.

VIRGINS.

Hark! the proud trumpet-clang

Calls us.—Hark!—gladness swells the note.

HADASSAH. Oh, I will drink, in unsated ecstacy

That thrilling sound.

PENINAH.

So Ammon's revel rout,

Triumphed over Israel, and the woe of thousands
Was to one man a banquet. This our joy
Lights the death-torch for widowed myriads.

VIRGINS.

Envious, Peninah?

PENINAH. Not envious, yet regretting man should live
By his fellow mortal's death : but yet rejoicing
My Jephthah has been the honoured instrument
Of God's righteous vengeance. Light and revelry
Long were estranged from your keen-sparkling eyes.

VIRGINS. We knew not then brave Jephthah would
arrive,

We knew not then Hadassah would arrive,
We knew not then Peninah would be joyful.

PENINAH. 'Tis but the gorgeous, hectic flush, betoken-
ing
A setting sun.

MAACHAH. Nay, nay, not so Peninah,
The gambolling zephyrs frolic through the bowers
Thick-strewn with roses. Merrily we dance
To their blithe breathings. As when your native
forests
In stately cadence wave their majestic heads
To the free winds of heaven, you rejoice.

PENINAH. Aye, they have borne like me the bitter
blast,
And they like me have sheltered the afflicted.
They see the flowers smiling at their feet
When churlish winter flees before laughing spring,
And I too live, to see my noble boy
Rich in the honest spoil of victory.

HADASSAH. Do you not hear a sound of acclamation?
'Tis like the distant murmuring of a torrent
On the waveless air of night. Hark!—hark again!
Is it my father?

PENINAH. Nay, my child, he cannot
Yet be so near.

HADASSAH. But yet he does arrive—
Israel has been delivered; my father-land
Is free.

(She goes out)

VIRGINS. And go not you, Peninah,
With us to welcome him?

PENINAH. In the tumultuous throng
He might overlook the features which once lighted
Joy in his eye; and I could not sustain
Even unmeant neglect. In calmer hours
My blessing shall await him. Peninah
Was all in all to him, and now is Jephthah
The stately oak around which my withering branches
Cling fondly.

VIRGINS. Kaled awaits to greet him
Upon the farthest ridge which skirts their path.

HADASSAH *re-enters*. In the cedar grove

Our minstrels with resounding melody
Wait to receive him. Maachah with thee
I lead the measure, and Peninah, thou
Throned in the honoured seat of Gilead,
Shalt be the queen of our homage. Hadassah leads
to thee
Thy foster-son, and tears of gratitude—
A son's blest gratitude shall lave thy feet.—

VIRGINS. One comes in haste,
O'erstrewn with dust, and panting with dispatch.

A WARRIOR *enters in haste.*

HADASSAH. Come they ?

WARRIOR. I ran with instant speed from Othniel.

HADASSAH. And came you not from my father,
And he with him ? Why ? wherefore comes he not ?
He should have been the harbinger of Jephthah,
Borne on the glowing wings of victory,
Not sent his tidings by a limping herald.

WARRIOR. I left him faint and sinking with fatigue,
Returning wearied from the close pursuit
Of Ammon, fleeing to the uttermost bound
Of Minnith, and the vineyards of the plain.

He found me, for they had left me with the wounded,
Yet fresh and vigorous. With speed, he cried,
Back to Hadassah.—
Oh, bid her, as she values Othniel,
Not meet her father.

HADASSAH. And he is wounded ; I alas, not near.

WARRIOR. He is most safe,
But hard exertion overmatched his strength.

HADASSAH. Not meet my father ?
I would have met him, had they borne him back
Naked and bleeding ; would have kissed his wounds,
Would have partaken of his deepest woe
And drank the dregs of his calamity,
Why must I not participate in his joy ?

WARRIOR. As it were he spake
Upon the fragile confine of the grave.

HADASSAH. Oh, I should be the scorn of infamy,
The very make-game of detraction's tongue ;
Be called, an envier of my father's worth
And not his child.—Why, why not meet my father ?

PENINAH. Events of unusual moment
Could in that hour, when nature's suffering
Contended with a victor's exultation,
Lead so to think or speak. Mysterious as it is,
Be advised.

WARRIOR. He bade me earnestly,
And had his strength responded to his soul,
The flaming minister of heaven had lagged
Behind his speed.

HADASSAH. Why stayed you not?

WARRIOR. He said, "Be swift," and I obeyed his word.

PENINAH. Do thus, dear child.
Meet not your father distant from this home,
But await with me in the portal:
If you should err, it will but make delight
Sweeter by such restraint.—Nay, be advised.
Impatience often mars enjoyment's edge.

HADASSAH. 'Tis nature's call that prompts me towards
my father.

WARRIOR. He, fainting, said I urge her not to meet
him.

HADASSAH. I must, I should strive to curb expecta-
tion
And hold in fetters all my earnest hopes.
A cloud o'er shadows now my day of joy.
Pass in, that I may commune with myself.

(They pass into the house.)

Fearfully bewildering communing. Either I must
Refrain from honouring Ammon's conqueror,
Or do displeasure to my—to my dear, fond, kind,
My beloved, devoted Othniel.—Oh, my poor, poor
heart,

It is a rending struggle, and I dare not
Trust myself to myself,—but must let resolution
Wait upon the moment's impulse.

(She passes in.)

* * * * *

THE TRIUMPHAL SONG.

'Tis no peaceful voice I hear,
'Tis no friendly tongue that calls.
Ammon howls o'er Israel's bier,
Ammon shouts, and Israel falls,
Falls beneath the conquering foe.

Darkness shrouds our prostrate land,
Darkness, dense as Egypt's night :
Death and Terror, hand in hand,
Sweep through the serried ranks of fight :
Drear Desolation and her horrid train
O'er fair Manasseh's fields, o'er Gilead's mountains
reign.

Woe, woe, distress, destruction reign ;
 Gaunt famine gnaws her rankling chain ;
 Shrill-shrieking fear, grim, wan despair
 Fill with their wail the wailing air ;
 Pale, speechless horror, fixed aghast,
 Glares o'er the carnage-drenched waste

In keenest, bitterest agony.

No burning tears suffuse his eye,
 No widowed mother hears his sigh,
 No weeping virgin hears his moan,
 No hapless orphan's ear shrinks from his dying
 groan.

Foul Ammon reigns.

* * * * *

A homeless, heartless, hopeless band,
 Trembling, dejected, mute they stand,
 Nor dare uplift the frenzied eye.

* * * * *

Hope, lovely, lingering, angel Hope
 Soft, soothing nurse of human woe,

Drops balm on retrospection's sting,
Bids conscience sheathe her angry teeth,
Gives strength to meek devotion's wing,
Bears them from this dark vale of death,
And leads them back from Superstition's fane,
To tread the flowery paths of righteousness again.

They weep,—they pray.

* * * * *

Hark—Hark—I hear
Havoc's fell chariot thundering near :
I hear a shriek—I hear a cry—
I hear the peal of victory.

* * * * *

I see, against a griesly band,
Firm Jephthah resolutely stand.—
I see him still—I hear him shout—
Ammon flees in hideous rout—
Slaughter leads her legions on—
Exult—Exult—the battle's won.

* * * * *

Loud, the sounding hills reply,
 Glory be to God on High :
 Glory be to God on High :—
 God has given us, victory.

* * * * *

Hark ! the merry timbrels sound,
 Clashing cymbals ring around ;
 Israel's harp, and Israel's voice
 Responsive sing—rejoice, rejoice.
 Rejoice, rejoice, the valleys cry,
 Rejoice, rejoice, the hills reply ;—
 Earth bounds with glee, huge ocean heaves,
 Delight gleams o'er his glancing waves,
 Yon splendid orbs exulting sing,
 Glory to heaven's eternal king.

* * * * *

See, the victor comes in state,
 Elders on his steps await ;
 Virgin voices, soft and sweet
 Warrior tones in cadence meet :

Deep, and full, and clear, and high
Roll the broad floods of harmony,
And sieze, and bear away my soul.

Welcome—Welcome—Welcome.—

JEPHTHAH, THE ELDERS, AND WARRIORS *enter*.

A loud shriek is heard from the house.

PENINAH AND VIRGINS.

Hold—hold her—

HADASSAH *rushes in, followed by the VIRGINS.*

HADASSAH. My father ! my dear father !

ASAHIEL. Back—back—

JEPHTHAH. My child !—My child !
This— Oh no—no—

HADASSAH. 'Tis I—Hadassah—Why avert your face ?

JEPHTHAH. Go—go—

HADASSAH. Oh, tell me—tell me—tell me, oh, my
father—

Has some malignant passion bleared my look
That you shrink from me ?

JEPHTHAH. Oh, my child, my child !
Would I had died 'ere thou had'st met me thus.

HADASSAH. No, no, my father !—I am still your child,
As fond, as doting as the child you loved—
Why dost thou shun me ?

JEPHTHAH. Alas ! alas, my daughter !
You are in league against my happiness ;
You mar my peace, you check me in my triumph,
You, you plant daggers in your father's heart.

HADASSAH. And have I lived, unhappily, to hear
My father say that I offend his sight ?

JEPHTHAH. No, no, my child—I pray you go away,
My heart still beats with yearning tenderness :
I love you—as a father—but—I pray you go.

HADASSAH. And with your frown upon me ?

JEPHTHAH. O ! my eternal father !
Why snappest thou the dearest tie of nature ?
Why— Oh, would that I had a friend,
To tell—
I dearly, dearly, do most dearly love you.—
— That dreadful vow.

HADASSAH. What vow? Why dreadful?

JEPHTHAH. Give me a little space.—

The fit of sorrow soon will have o'erpassed,
And I shall speak— I will enter in
And tell— Can, can I enter there
Where Gilead sate, where my revered father
Will frown upon me wheresoe'er I turn,
Will scowl, will choke my trembling utterance,
Will curse his child, as I condemn my own?

HADASSAH. What deadly spirit has o'erpowered
you?—

I never saw my father so oppressed,
Never saw him thus.—

JEPHTHAH. But you shall see him stand
With impious courage, at God's holy altar,
Shall see him bind a human sacrifice,
Shall see him tear the vesture from her heart,
That heart which glows in fondest love towards
him ;
And while her placid eye still beams upon him,
Shall see him strike.—through that kind faithful
heart—
You shall see this.

HADASSAH. I never saw a human sacrifice.

JEPHTHAH. You—you must see it—you must—you,
Hadassah !

Must see a father rob his only child
Of life—for I—for he has sworn an oath,—
And he must fulfil his oath.

HADASSAH. Am I in a horrid dream ?
I thought that I had heard my father speak to me
Unkindly——
You—you—my father ! would not sacrifice
An only child ?

JEPHTHAH. I am most resolute.

HADASSAH. I never, never frowned upon you, my
father !
I never, when the faults of childishness
Called down displeasure, never did I say,
Never thought you harsh. I gloried in my father ;
No sound was sweeter music than his tongue,
No happiest countenance e'er wore such glee,
No kinder bosom lulled me to my rest :
It was my father, nursed, looked, spoke to me.
I slept, I waked, I thought, I lived, for him,
And still I think he will not injure me
'Though he has said it.—Will you slay me, father ?

JEPHTHAH. I have so sworn.
I lifted up my frantic hand to Heaven,
And swore that I—that I would sacrifice

Whatever first should meet me from my home.
You met me.—

—You have drawn upon my head
This dreadful curse.

HADASSAH. You will not slay me.—I have heard you
say,

My mother, dying, charged you to protect me.
You told her then :—I was, alas, too young
To feel the terrors of a mother's loss,
That you would, in the path of rectitude,
Train me to be a lamp in Israel.

With pious fervour oft you gazed upon me,
And while the swollen tear trembled in your eye
Oft called me by that beloved mother's name,
Yet now—Alas ! oh Jephthah ! oh, my father !
Must you destroy me ?—

Must you to satisfy an impious oath
Break other oaths ?——

You swore upon my dying mother's lip
To love me.—When sickness hung upon me,
When foul disease spread languor o'er my cheek,
When these sad eyes, now glistening in tears,
Then scarcely could bear the sacred light of heaven,
Then scarcely could penetrate the films of death
Then scarcely could see the parent I adored ;
Oh, then you hung, immersed in misery,
Anxiously watching o'er my wretched couch :
Oh, then you loved me, when a loathsome corpse
Was all you had. Now health invigorates,

Now joy, now transport dance upon my brow,
 Now— Oh, my honoured father !
 You will not slay me.

JEPHTHAH. Which way I turn, all, all is misery,
 And I, of all men am the most unhappy.
 If I forbear to execute my vow
 I then am criminal ; and if I dare
 With impious violence to drag my daughter,
 And offer an unholy sacrifice
 I then am criminal.— Too much
 I have idolized thee, oh my ill-fated child.

OTHNIEL *enters.*

OTHNIEL. Oh —————
 Oh, that this earth would gape, would tear me from
 This fatal suffering—
 —Oh, my lord, my king !—
 My friend—my father—
 —Oh, my lord, my king !—

JEPHTHAH. So do my God to me as I fulfil
 My oath.

OTHNIEL. My father !

JEPHTHAH. So have I sworn—so God has pleased to
 visit

My oath upon me.— Holy be his name,
Though written in my blood.—

—He is most just

Although I see not, with my earth-bleared sight,
His object, or his end.—Yet, it is just,
And I must bear the penalty of my sinful,
My mad idolatry of my poor child—
But, God is just—

HADASSAH.

And Hadassah is his child :

She is God's child, and Hadassah has the spirit
Of Jephthah's child, and of God's child. She can
yield

Steadily, gratefully, whatever God
Has given of life, and of all that can endear
Life to her soul : and—O ! my heavenly father !
So sanctify my end that it may glorify
Thy holiest mercies ; for thou art the God
Of truth, of justice, of mercy.—

—Yet, oh, that I had striven
In communing with thee, instead of trusting to
My own frail, wilful will.—

—Yet am I submissive
To thy pure, thy righteous will.—

—So be it— My father !
It is not thy will, it is not thy self-willed deed,
But thou art called, as Abraham, to atone
For his sin, by Isaac's blood :—and if my blood
Could be an expiatory offering for the vile
Idolatry of Israel ; could be the grateful gift
Of my loved father-land to the God, whose arm

Has, by my father's hand, redeemed my country,
I were but too, too blessed, and would joyously,
Eagerly add to thine oath—

—Yet—oh, my father!

I have too fondly dreamt of earthly hopes;
Am even now too maddened in the whirl
Of pleasure in thy triumph, to be a fit,
A calm, unstruggling sacrifice.—Give me, I pray
thee,

Time to recal my senses; to sober down
My aspirations; to quell, to sacrifice
My rebellious life-craving.—

—With my virgin friends

I would bewail my sad virginity,
For two short months, within yon dreary hills,
There to subdue, in grief and penitence,
Each heinous sin, and so to prepare myself
The better for God's glory—

—Bear with me

I pray thee; and I will assuredly return,
And thou shalt do with me according to
Thine oath.

JEPHTHAH.

In bitterness, my child!

In grievous bitterness, must I bewail
Thy virginity, and my childlessness.—Depart
In the peace of God, and in God's peace, serenely
Return.—

He passes out.

ITHRA. Throw off these gorgeous attributes of joy,
 And sit with dust and ashes on your heads.—
 We now have seen the extreme boundary
 Of sublunary suffering and bliss.
 We find how closely together intertwined
 Are sorrow and gladness.

All pass out, excepting HADASSAH AND OTHNIEL.

OTHNIEL. I,—I have sacrificed—
 I—I have sacrificed thee—
 Yes, it was I,—but fainting nature stayed me,
 Or I had been a wall of adamant
 To hold thee back.—
 —Hadassah !—let us flee—
 The time, the circumstance all favour us.—
 I know the track of every mountain torrent,
 I, in some darkling cave can lodge you safely.

HADASSAH. Add not, nay add not to the bitter pang
 Of parting life.—I, with utmost fervency,
 Still cling to you : the fountains of my tears,
 My blood, my life, my spirit, all are yours :
 But I am still a daughter. He gave me life,
 He would have given me happiness, too large
 For mortals.— Never parent's heart
 Yearned towards a child as towards me, Jephthah's
 yearned.
 ————— All righteous Heaven

Demands me.— For this sacrifice
The Ammonite was conquered.—

— my country's persecutor
Fell at my father's feet ; and I am happy,
Blessed indeed to be the testimony
Of a whole nation's thanks—
—grieve not then, Othniel !
We yet shall meet—

OTHNIEL. Never more to part
We have met— He shall not drag thee
Like a brute beast— thus circling thee
I brave his vengeance.

HADASSAH. Heaven's vengeance rides
Indignant on the winged thunderbolt
Which blasts ingratitude. As his child he reared you,
And as his child he loved you.— I entreat you,
Submit with a child's reverence.

OTHNIEL. Oh God !—My God !—
Dreadfully mysterious are thy unseen ways.

They pass out.

* * * * *

THE VICINITY OF MIZPEH.

OTHNIEL.

MAHUDATHA *enters from behind.*

MAHUDATHA. So do I meet with fortunate occasion
To pursue my purpose. A ready instrument
And in apt mood for tampering with, I find.
Now, Jephthah ! look to thy safety.

OTHNIEL. She met him.—
And I am thus bereaved of my bride
After my service ; after we were plighted,
Were as each other.

MAHUDATHA.

Renowned Othniel !

The red right-hand of Israel's princely host,
A host of princes, every prince a host :
There the true spirit of a warrior spake.
By what right does thy chief dare rob thee of
Thy dearest hope ?

OTHNIEL. By the right of strength : but I am strong
as he is

And as fearless.— If I instantly pursue
And bear her off, despite of his malediction,
Who, who shall wrest her from my nervous grasp ?

MAHUDATHA. A virgin she was doomed to sacrifice :
If not a virgin.—

OTHNEIL. Polluted dog !—thy own malignant thought
Choke thee !—By Heaven ! if thought or counsel
Of harm to her once pass thy coward lip,
I will tear thee limb from limb.

MAHUDATHA.

I did but muse,

And in the overflowing of compassion
Thought aloud.—There are extremest points
Where vice and virtue border upon each other,
And what is vice, in common circumstance,
Shall become heroic virtue, when circumstances
Unusual call for correspondent action :
It is the object sanctifies the deed.

OTHNIEL. Her purity would save her amidst a host
Of savage aliens.—So do my Maker to me.
If aught of evil prompt me.—No, I would guard her
As dragons guard barbaric treasures;
As eagles hover o'er their aëries
So would I watch around the sanctuary
Where I would place her; and, beneath her feet,
When death should summon us, my bones should
lie
Enshrined.

MAHŪDATHA. Glorious patriotism
Had found a worthier path.

OTHNIEL. How mean you?

MAHUDATHA. One man takes one path up the mountain's height
Another hews another.

OTHNIEL. Sententiously,
And darkly as an oracle you speak,

MAHUDATHA. But when the mountain's crest has been
attained
Little heeds either by what path he reached it :
Or when the racer's task has been achieved
Who counts the length of the steps upon which he
flew ?
Means are but means, the homely scaffolding

Of goodliest structures, and the work itself
 Shines not less wondrously, though the labourer's
 hands
 Were rough, and his tools unsightly.

OTHNIEL. I charge thee speak undisguisedly.

MAHUDATHA. But even now
 Thou hadst slain me.

OTHNIEL. Speak, and I will hear intently.

MAHUDATHA. Wouldest thou
 Compass Hadassah's safety?

OTHNIEL. I would deliver her,
 And save her father.

MAHUDATHA. We expect a prophet
 Like unto Moses.— Seraphic purity
 Glows not more brightly round the Eternal's throne;
 Cherubic mildness smiles not more graciously,
 Calm dignity in Angel's gesture shone
 Not more majestically, than sweetness, grace,
 And pure ethereal intelligence
 In her are all embodied.—Fearlessness,
 Valour, heroism, or whatever else
 Is man's own glory, could not be selected
 More perfect than in Ammon's conqueror.
 (Othniel's, not Jephthah's, was the ready hand

Which smote the foe-man in his fiercest pride :
Aroer were nought, had Minnith not been subdued,)
And might not Heaven decree the progeny
Of such an union should lead on our armies
To conquer the nations ?

OTHNIEL. Thou hast stricken a chord
Which trembled when I touched it.—I have some-
times
Framed such a distant vision.

MAHUDATHA. When the oppressed Hebrew
Sunk to the earth, He did not hesitate
To slay the oppressor, although the Hebrews had
been
Nourished by Egypt. Ehud did not scruple
To slay a tyrant.

OTHNIEL. He was a foreigner.

MAHUDATHA. All tyrants must be aliens to all
The nations of the world. Home-born or distant,
They are the wild beasts to be hunted down,
And I would, I would in a brother's breast
Sheathe deep my sword, if ever he inflicted
Wrong on his fellow-man.—Patriotism
Is the most noble, glorious, and heroic,
Of human virtues. Grovelling, despicable,
All people count endurance of a wrong :—
But I o'erweary you ; my talk strays far away

From love and tenderness, congenial thoughts
 For younger, and warmer hearts : yet am I young,
 And warm in heart towards virtue suffering,
 Though rude in speech.

(Steps back—but listens.)

OTHNIEL.

He loves me, though his speech
 Be blunt, and inconsiderate whether it wound
 Or soothe by it's independent honesty,
 And I should thank him, for that he means well.—
 He swore an oath, unholy in itself,
 Itself unbinding by the moody rashness
 With which it rushed unbidden to the world.—
 Should I not cut the thongs of bigotry
 And bid his soul, go free?—Were it not worthy,
 Honest, virtuous, aye holy in it's energy,
 Where reason blinds herself, to bind her with fetters
 'Till she unhoodwink herself? or, should she fail,
 'Twere most unreasonable to allow blinded reason
 Freedom to maim herself.—We bind the brute,
 Or even destroy him, if his wildness yield not
 To hunger, or to chastisement.—Man, mad,
 Or, in perversity of reason, reasoning ill
 On one point, although in all else in sane health,
 Is, on that point, as a brute, and can alone,
 As his fellow brute, be bound in wholesome chains,
 And perforce, be rendered harmless. The impious,
 The adulterer, the murderer, are injurious,

And dangerous madmen. Destructive in their madness,

Unsafe to all, all, for the common safety,

Adjudge them worthy of death.—Were it then sin,

To attain an end so righteous as to save

Youth, beauty, innocence—by wholesome restraint,—

By—by—diverting the current of his thoughts—

By—my tongue cannot master it's utterance—

By——

(He passes out, talking confusedly.)

MAHUDATHA. The venom works. So speed it.

(He passes out.)

* * * * *

A STREET IN MIZPEH.

PENINAH, (*Sitting in Sackcloth.*)

PENINAH. Oh, woe, woe, woe, misery unutterable,
Intolerable woe, worse, worse than death,
Worst of all frightful ills that can befall
A widowed mother : wretched is my lot,
Intolerably wretched !

MAHUDATHA *enters.*

MAHUDATHA. Who, who art thou thus heard above all
else

In piteous wailing ?

PENINAH. Woe, woe, anguish unutterable !

MAHUDATHA. What direful increase of calamity,
Can, in this hour of national distress,
When all but thou forget their personal griefs
In the public sorrow, thus overpower thee ?

PENINAH. Woe, woe—my child, my miserable child.

MAHUDATHA. If remedy there can be for thy grief,
Behold the Judge proceeding to the Gate,
To administer justice : he will do thee right.

PENINAH. He strive to lift my load of wretchedness ?
Oh, woe, woe, woe !

JEPHTHAH *enters.*

MAHUDATHA. Go, wretched suppliant,
Implore his help.

PENINAH. Oh, woe, woe, woe !

JEPHTHAH. What is thy woe ?

PENINAH. Unutterable sorrow !

JEPHTHAH. Rise, wretched mourner : rise, be comforted.

PENINAH. I had a child, but I have one no longer.

JEPHTHAH. If Heaven have pleased to take that life
away,

Which Heaven alone had power to bestow,
Take comfort : many are the ills of life
And he escapes them best, who soonest dies.

PENINAH. I had a child : he was an only child,
And I, a widow. In that tyranny,
Now overpast, the righteous hand of Heaven
Called back my husband's spirit to it's home,
Leaving me poor, and old, and comfortless.
I felt—that was the common misery,—
The countless ills of poverty and famine,
The countless terrors of a desolate life ;
And, grief upon grief increasing, in my distress
I sold to one, he was my next of kin,
My child's inheritance, my whole subsistence.
Even that poor pittance was, by the Ammonite,
Wrenched from my grasp. To rescue us from death
I begged the humbling bread of charity,
And now he takes my child, the child that I have
nursed,
The child I looked upon, as the grateful staff
Of my old age.—A bond-man he will be,
And I, an outcast—woe, woe, woe is me—

JEPHTHAH. Just or unjust his claim, twice, twice two-
fold,
Will I repay him.

PENINAH. He will not be repaid,
But for a bond-slave he will have my child.

JEPHTHAH. Suspicion is the offspring of thy fear,
And misery traduces more than malice.
He is not lost to the common ties of nature.

ITHRA, GALEED, MATTATHA, AND OTHER ELDERS *enter*.

ITHRA. Once more we come.

JEPHTHAH. I could have spared your friendship
From this it's importunity. My hours
Are occupied.

MATTATHA. Jephthah, we have made you
Our Judge, and must insist upon attendance
In that high office.

JEPHTHAH. Trouble me no more;
Ye do but importune me, where I cannot,
I dare not yield.

ITHRA. We know that you were compassionate.

JEPHTHAH. And am so still.

PENINAH. Bear witness that he is so
His kindness unto me.—He will redeem my child
From bondage.—Elders of Manasseh !
Persuasion from your tongues must be doubly potent,
Where I, a poor widow, have so fully sped:
For ye are princes.

JEPHTHAH. Ye all are fathers. Do but, as your children
Are beauteous, innocent, virtuous, ennobled,
By warm, enthusiastic, patriot zeal ;
And in the o'erflowing of parental pride,
Ye clasp them to your hearts ; think, thus feels
Jephthah.

——— Outstretched upon their couches,
When death, grim death, his clammy finger places
Upon their lips, and biting desolation
Nips, in the blossoming, your first-blown flowers
Your only flowers, the flowers o'er which you hung
In silent rapture ; the dear, cherished buds
You nursed, you tended, watched their opening
 charms,
Watched them at noon, at eventide, at night,
When blighting airs, when chilling dews fell thick
And threatened to destroy them :—think, when the
 scalding tears
Sit on your eyelids ; thus is Jephthah's heart
Racked.— I pray you speak no more.—

I am your chief.

ITHRA. 'Tis an unholy offering.

GALEED. We will redeem it with our choicest flocks,
Our herds shall bleed. The rivers of all Judea
Shall flow with blood. Spice, frankincense, and
myrrh,
All the rich treasures of the plundered east
Shall oppress the altar.

JEPHTHAH. I cannot.

MATTATHA. If human blood, if innocent blood must
expiate
This dreadful vow : take, from our bosoms take
Our dearest daughters. We will give to Heaven,
If Heaven require it, all our progeny,
Our spoil, our wealth.—She pleaded for us, Jephthah !
When thou wert stern.

PENINAH. You are compassionate,
You have saved my child : the sorrow of a stranger
Waked from her forced, unnatural lethargy
Your natural pity. Oh, my judge, my king !
Have mercy upon the child of your own blood,
Your flesh, your bone, your life.

ITHRA. We kneel, we soil ourselves in dust before
thee

Entreating—

JEPHTHAH. It is the hour when Justice
Awaits me to administer her dictates :
There ye will see I can be as merciful
As rigorously just.

PENINAH. Refuse you then ?

JEPHTHAH. Distressed suppliant,
I will avenge you. At the City Gate
I sit in judgment.

PENINAH. (*unveiling*) Dost thou not know me,
Jephthah ?—
I am no widow : I have no captive son :
I—Jephthah !—Years have paled my wonted bloom,
And misery sucked the health-glow from my cheek—
I—Jephthah—am Peninah.—These withered arms
Have held you.— Shall they be held up
In supplication ?

JEPHTHAH. I am most grateful, and do love
And honor thee, my foster-mother.

PENINAH. I once knew
When Jephthah was most kind, most merciful.
There was a time when Pity, upon that brow
Sate like a Spirit in the beams of heaven
To succour mortals.—The most loathsome reptile,

Hideous, unclean, was shielded by your presence
From the urchin's torturing.—You have fiercely
striven

When but a boy, with men, with bearded men
To save the oppressed :—and I—Jephthah ! it was
I,

Cherished the compassion which ennobled you.—

I, tutored the rising of the daring spirit ;

I, curbed the war-horse in his young career

Taught him forbearance, when he should forbear,

And, taught him vengeance, when he should be
vengeful.

And I can yet plead, in the still, calm voice

Of gentlest mercy.— Do not stain your hand

With innocent blood.—You yet are merciful.—

Brilliant amidst the dew of nature's incense

The penitent Sun arises, celestial beams

Play round your brow, the awakening of heaven,

When from the veil of dark, mysterious clouds

The effulgence of the Deity is poured,

Glow on your cheek :—you give her to my prayer ?

JEPHTHAH. I, in the awful presence of my Maker,
Raised up my hand :—nor will I lower it
Though angels weep.

PENINAH.

Will the tiger

Slay her own young ? Will the gaunt hyæna

Feast upon his offspring ?—I was your mother,
Jephthah !

JEPHTHAH. I have closed my ears
To aught but duty. Resolutely suffering
I endure.—

PENINAH. Will you destroy your child ?

(As Jephthah is passing out.)

PENINAH. Unrelenting ?—so, unrelentingly
I curse thee.—I, thy mother, here adjure
Against thee the stores of vengeance :—be thy birth
Blotted from record :—cursing fall upon thee :—
Murder and bloodshed dog thee :—may the sword
Thirst for thee :—if thy field
Yield thee an increase, blight and mildew
Gnaw through the ear :—murrain and rot,
Rage in thy flocks and herds :—heaven's pregnant
dew
Fill thee with blains :—locusts and venomous flies
Rise with the sun, and in his setting beam
Float venom :— Leprosy,
Cover thy head :—Consumption waste thee :—
Gnawing rheumatism—all the dire plagues
Beset thee :—steam from the bottomless abyss
All Egypt's curses :—and, to fill thy cup,
Thy future daughters be debauched, and vile,
Thy sons be vagabonds—and—I, Peninah, pray it
May madness seize thee :—

I, Jephthah ! took thee up
And nourished thee ; and now I curse thee.—

Madness hurry thee on, until the dread fiend
 Arm thine accursed hand against thyself.
 Die thou abhorred, a detested suicide.—

I will lead against thee
 The bands of Ephraim : even now they pass
 The fords of Jordan : I, thy foster-mother,
 Will lead them.

(She rushes out.)

MATTATHA.

O ! Israel !—to your tents !—

Is this the man we hold in reverence ?
 Is this the monster which enslaves our land ?
 Is he not bloody, cruel, barbarous ?
 Is he not lost to every lovely tie
 Of human nature ?—Israel, to your tents !

ASAHEL. And saw you not, inconsiderate Mattatha,
 How nature struggled ?—I stand for Jephthah.

MATTATHA.

I, for Israel :

I, for my country : I, to save my home
 From the brute license of a tyrant's will :
 A tyrant, who became a conqueror
 But by the valour of the men he scorns :
 And who has conquered, but that he may wallow
 In every crime that stains humanity.
 What will he spare ? on what will he have mercy
 Who thus begins his march of cruelty ?

Shall we obey this thirsty maniac?
 Shall we submit to his authority
 Who has no power to controul himself?
 Up, Israel, up, and shew yourselves like men :
 Up to your tents !

(The Elders rush out.)

THE PEOPLE, *(Without.)* War, war, eternal war
 Against Jephthah.—War, war !—

MAHUDATHA. This too shall work for me.
 Othniel will sting the deeper ; these more surely,
 And Ephraim consummate the deed of vengeance :
 Then, Jephthah ! spurn me.—

Nothing though I am :
 The unheeded reptile bites more certainly
 Than the opposing lion ; and my subtlety
 Shall harm thee more than the enraged tongues
 Of thousands.

(He passes out.)

* * * * *

KALED. It is a crime, it is no holy deed ;
It is no dictate of our pure religion ;
It is a crime, it is a crime, my Jephthah,
Nay, go not.—I am stepping from this world,
Into a world unknown, baffling our fancy
Of terrible or good.— I am now
No ardent lover pleading for his bride ;
No wretch imploring for his worshipped gold,
But, I am here a suppliant for your soul,
For you, for yours.—I feel the mist of death
Hang heavily upon me.—
I cannot utter what my spirit prompts—
I die—O, Jephthah !—do not, do not slay her.—

JEPHTHAH. Oh, have I not enough of misery ?—
Where'er I go, whate'er I look upon,
All, all is wretchedness, and woe, and death,
Unlimited, unceasing.—
A hapless alien came I to the world,
Shame, and repentance wept upon my birth,
And I shall go hence in their company.

KALED. Dark—dark—faint—faint.—

JEPHTHAH. I will return to you
And give you comfort.

KALED. No—leave me not in death,
Quit me not, Jephthah !

JEPHTHAH.

I will return.

KALED. (*Throwing himself forward, clasps Jephthah's
knees, crying*)

Spare, spare her.—

(and dies.)

JEPHTHAH. O, God of Heaven! restrain me.—

Let thy thunder

And blasting lightning strike me.

Hide me, earth!

Rocks, mountains! bury, bury, bury me!

Oh, Kaled! Kaled! My father! Oh my father!

(Throws himself upon the corpse.)

* * * * *

A ROOM.

JEPHTHAH, *sleeping.*OTHNIEL *enters.*

OTHNIEL. He is a tyrant.—But, I was found by him,
A poor, deserted infant : he nourished me
With his own daughter : taught me to call him,
father,
Oft twined our little arms together, and fast bound
them
With gentlest flowers :—but—he is a tyrant ;
He is a tyrant, cruel and barbarous,
In this resolve, most resolutely cruel,
And I as cruel if I interpose not

Whatever strength high Heaven has given me.—
 So near—and asleep !—one, well directed blow
 Releases all.—

— I could look upon death
 In any shape,— but tremble now
 At my own footstep.—

Shall I, assassin like,
 Steal on the dead, when nature in security
 Locks up the senses ?—Senses which, awakened
 Will lead him on to irretrievable,
 Unending anguish.—

JEPHTHAH. Poor little one,
 It's dear angelic gladness. lights up again
 Dreams of my own child's childhood.—

OTHNIEL. Can he dream
 Of her he means to kill ?

JEPHTHAH. Again thou smilest ;
 Dear little rogue, I clasp thee to my heart
 And kiss my pretty cherub.—Wilt thou be
 The staff of aged Jephthah ?—Yes, thou wilt,
 Sayest thou, my renewed life ?

OTHNIEL. Conscience, be still—
 Be still !—Shall I slay—murder him
 In his dream of joy ?—

JEPHTHAH. My pretty boy

Dear little rogue—my rosebud—my playful kid—

OTHNIEL. Sleeping, he little recks how his foster-child
Steals like a serpent into his solitude
To sting him ———to sting his benefactor—
His father—

— Awake ! awake !

And face me,— there is your sword,—
Defend yourself against me—
For I am armed against you for my bride
Whom you tear from me.—

— Stand—defend yourself—

I would not, like a coward, murder you
In sleep.

JEPHTHAH. I could have borne a vision from the dead
With firmer resolution, than I thus meet
The eye of Othniel.

OTHNIEL. Draw,—defend yourself.—

JEPHTHAH. Strike as I am—unarmed.—I will stand
motionless.

OTHNIEL. Surrender to me my bride,
Or, I will seek her in your hidden soul.—
I came not here to prate.—Surrender her
Or—I am desperate.—She is my love,
My bride, my wife.—You have no power o'er her,
She is bound to me.—Surrender her—or—

JEPHTHAH. Young man ! stand back ; there are extreme limits
To human endurance,—leave me.

OTHNIEL. Or with your life, or with my bride.

JEPHTHAH. Young man ! the man who never feared
to meet

Death in all shapes, stands unresisting here
And unarmed before you.—I recapitulate
No benefits bestowed : as a man I meet you,
And—as a stranger ; one, I know not more.—
I swerve not.— I am in the forward path
Of a stern duty. Withstand, or withstand me not
I pass on to meet my daughter.

OTHNIEL. I interpose
As Aaron between the living and the dead.
I see you, dying in this sacrifice,
I hear the voice of blood ascend to Heaven.

JEPHTHAH. I am fast bound to Heaven, by an oath,
An oath, written down and ratified in heaven ;
An oath, for which I slew the Ammonite,
An oath, for which I gained my country's freedom,
And I will pay the utmost skel of
The debt I owe.—Stand not, irresolute—
Or act, or leave me.—Know that Providence
Protects all those who tread the inflexible,

Strict, perilous path of duty.—Therein do I tread
Though it were paved with scorpions.—Go, in peace.

OTHNIEL. I now am calm as thou art, resolute
As thou art, in my straight-forward path
Steady as thou art, swerving not until Heaven
Prohibit.— So shall we part, or meet,
In war, or in strictest amity, as Providence
Shall guide, or overrule. Be thou in peace.

(He passes out.)

JEPHTHAH. Peace has ill slept upon this weary heart.

ASAHEL *enters.*

ASAHEL. Dark, dreary, and oppressive—the wan sun
Weak and unwilling, struggles ineffectually
Against the brooding mist. Thick, impenetrable
clouds
Lowr portentously as though nature laboured,
And shuddered in her course. So waningly the day
Looked down from Eden, when, guilty and miser-
able,
Weeping unavailingly, our sad first parents

Felt thorns and thistles spring beneath their
feet.—

So, resolutely striving, the first man,
Bearing within his bosom unquenchable
Remorse, toiled on his way, and, in his manly
strength,
Endured, and submitted ; bearing the heavy yoke
In hope.—would, would there were here a hope.—

JEPHTHAH.

Say on,

I can bear aught. Nay, falter not,—thy tongue,
Candid and not impetuous, has often
Spoken truth, in fearlessness: sweet, yet bitter
truth—

Oh, that my tongue had been as wholesomely curbed.
Say on.—

ASAHEL.

Mattatha and the elders are enleagued,
And straitly sworn ; and they have brave, and re-
solved,
Tried, war-hewn, followers.

JEPHTHAH.

So it is well with them,

They know their duty, as I too well know mine.

ASAHEL.

Indignant at thy insolent contempt
Of them in joining battle, and thus grasping
The laurel from their brows, hot Ephraim,
Strong in their thousands, have already secured

The fords, and in their rage, impetuously
Hurry onward, threatening, with hostile fire,
To burn thee and thy house.

JEPHTHAH.

And is it well in them,

In them, Joseph's children, womb-brethren of
Manasseh

To envy outcast Jephthah?—I, and my people strove
With Ammon, did they then deliver me?

Did I not put my life within my hands

And save my country? Wherefore would they come
Against a man bowed down by suffering?

It is not well, and God shall hold them in
His stern rebuke.

ASAHEL.

And—

JEPHTHAH.

That averted eye,

And tremulous lip, tell me more eloquently

Than volumed words, thy more important warn-
ing.—

Thou tellest me, the two months have elapsed;

That, faithful to her word, my daughter now

Descends from the mountains: that, in its lone-
liness,

Turned from, deserted, almost abhorred, the altar

Of my Lord God, holy and righteous name!

Awaits:—

and I do honour

And love thee for thy silence.——

— I would sit

And meditate my prayers—

— Go thou, my son !

As God shall guide thee.

ASAHEL *passes out.*

JEPHTHAH *sits absorbed in prayer.*

AN OPEN COUNTRY.

MAHUDATHA, *watching*.

MAHUDATHA. It is not done,—and I, still unrevenged,
Live yet to glut my nourished appetite.

——— Though I yet have failed to sting,
By arming against thy life the secret hand
Of the orphan thou hast reared ; thy injuries,
Thy scorn, thy contempt, long-cherished, and close-
hugged,

And brooded over, shall not rest unrequited.—
The Amalekite forgets not and forgives not,
Though he might feign to be an Israelite,

And through long years await his determinate
end :

And though there lived but one, that one is stronger
In his stealthiness, than iron-sheathed Ammon in
his car :

And, but I strive to make my vengeance rankle,
And fester, and agonise, and torture, my own
arm

Should burst the film of my hypocrisy,
And the veiled Israelite, start up, in his strength,
A proud, revengeful Amalekite.—

Be still.—

OTHNIEL *enters*.

MAHUDATHA, Art thou resolved ?—

OTHNEIL. Resolved, and daring,
And trusting on thy ready arm and heart
For counsel, and for instant aid. Thy band
Is steady and is true ?

MAHUDATHA. True, firm, and steady,
And impetuous as fasting tigers.

OTHNIEL. Thou knowest well
Each path and pass. Lead me, on the instant,
on,—
We will surprize, and carry her off, and hold

The tyrant at defiance. Thou knowest their way?

MAHUDATHA. Honouring thy worth and thy affection,
I have watched

Their sacred haunts ; and, as their mournful wail,
At morn, at noon, at eventide arose,
Have dashed the salt tears from my scalded cheek,
For I wept—in wrath I wept :—and, but for thee,
Had borne them off. Whither ? whither hostile
foot

Had never tracked them.—They were even now
Descending from the hills, and cannot yet
Be disentangled from them.—Rooted to the earth,
Like sturdy wrestlers poised against each other
In mortal struggle, o'er a precipitous path
Stand frowning rocks, and darkly around them
leaning,

Rigid with anxious, breathless interest
O'erhanging mountains hem in the appalling scene ;
And countless defiles, twining through their bowels,
Lead to a chasm, where nature, in her sport,
Retiring from the labour of creation,
Has hewn a mimic semblance of all glorious,
Resplendent visions. Through that narrow cleft
Thy bride must pass : thence, spirited away,
Her nearest fellow shall but miss her friend
Unknowing how.

OTHNEIL.

Lead, lead me rapidly.

Delay not,—point me out that secret path,

And I will instantaneously seize,
And bear her off.

MAHUDATA.

So shall I greedily

Flesh my rich vengeance.

[*They pass out.*]

* * * * *

A RAVINE.

HADASSAH, AZUBAH, AND VIRGINS.

HADASSAH.

Fare ye well, loved hills,
 Streams, woods, and groves. In your still solitude
 Listening well pleased, God hath sent down, in
 mercy,
 His holy calmness; and, subdued by him,
 All earthly joys, all earthly vanities,
 Absorbed, unvalued, died in my secret soul.
 I only now live, move, and act in him,
 And covet only how best to contemplate,

To adore, to serve him.—Sublimely as ye rear
Cloud-piercing summits ! your age-whitened forms,
And drink the pure dews from the transparent air,
And greet the first blush of ascending morn,
And glow refulgent in the mid-day sun,
And lave ye in his evening-tempered ray,
So shall my soul, above sublunary bliss,
Raised and sublimed, drink in intelligence,
And, communing with angels, be as they.—
Fare, fare ye well, mountain, and hill, and glen,
Torrent, and stream, and zephyr, fare ye well.

AZUBAH. Would that such calm, such blest serenity
Dwelt in our bosoms. Joyous in thy own joy,
Blest in thy bliss, happy in thy happiness,
Pure in thy purity, wilt thou ascend
A seraph among angels : we, bereft
Of joy, of hope, of comfort, sitting aghast,
Can only aggravate our desolation
By contrasting it with thy glory.

VIRGINS.

Oh, alas !

Leave us not thus.

HADASSAH.

It is God's holy will.

We must bow down submissively, and bless,
And thank, and love, and worship, and adore.
Soon must we part ; the night of sorrowing
Has ushered in the morning of delight,
Soft, and unruffled by an evil thought.

AZUBAH. We have been together,
As little birds reared in one kindred nest,
Have slept, have waked, have wept, have smiled
 together,
And now.—

HADASSAH. We part but for a short, short
 time ;
Ye still to buffet with the wild commotion
Of life's rude surge, to steer your fragile barks
Through shoals and quicksands ; I, to soar aloft,
To ride on the zephyr's winglet, or to mingle
With the glad choristers which round the throne,
Of God, in the inmost heaven, glorify
And honour, and delight in him, whose love,
The heaven of heavens in it's immensity
Cannot contain.

OTHNIEL, MAHUDATHA, AND FOLLOWERS, *creep around
 them.*

OTHNIEL. So still, so fearless, while around her, all
Are rent with anguish ! This it is to die
In the glad certainty of future life.

AZUBAH. I cannot thus part from you : one common
 fate
Has bound us and shall bind us still, for ever.
Let me die with you ; let me die with you.

OTHNIEL, MAHUDATHA, AND FOLLOWERS, *rush in and*
seize HADASSAH : THE VIRGINS *flee*.

HADASSAH. Othniel !—Mahudatha !—opposite
 As the cherubic host and the swart bands
 Of the abhorred Prince of Darkness, how have ye
 Consorted in this weak, this treacherous,
 This ungrateful, this unheroic, this unaffectionate,
 This stealthy, this degrading snare?—
 — Bad man ! from thee,
 From these,—outlawed by even the rejected,
 The enemies of all : as Ishmael wild, and fierce,
 Untameable, and only faithful each
 For self-advantage in all crime ; this covert deed,
 Fit deed for obscurity but too congenial
 To the hand, head, heart, which prompted, planned,
 And dared to put in practice : from ye all
 What other harvest could have been looked for?—
 But that the mighty oak should have borne hemlock,
 That the majestic cedar should have yielded
 Cockle, and darnel, that the generous lion,
 That the dauntless war horse, should have enleagued
 with such,
 The insensible earth would weep.—

Here, alone, I stand

Unarmed, unaided, entrapped, and at your mercy,
 Yet fearless, yet untrembling, confident, secure ;
 For the dread God of Heaven, against whom

Ye stand arrayed, in this your sinfulness,
Shields, guards, protects, and, if need were, would
even

In his all-crushing mightiness, trample upon
And bruise ye into dust.—Before him, ye
Are but a spider's web, and the princely eagle,
Soaring in the sun-light, fans ye into nothing.

I onward go, in God's strength, despite of yours.

MAHUDATHA. The accursed coward !—I choke !—some
other—

(He slinks away with his followers.)

OTHNIEL. Ashamed, confounded, and abased,
Before God and thee I beg.—Seeing the impene-
trable,
Unfathomable depth of man's dark heart,
He knows the purity, the intensity
Of the love which prompted me :—thou only can'st
Know motives by my actions. Self-condemned,
I stand before thee, convicted : base, and low,
As thou art high and honoured, in my inability
To comprehend thy exalted, thy holy obedience.
Vile that I have been, not to have foreseen
That she whom I loved with such blind idolatry
Would think, would feel, would act, as only angels

Can act, can feel, can think. Abjectly
I bow before thy rebuking.

HADASSAH. I am most sacred, I have been set apart,
And devoted unto God. All earthly love,
Filial, connubial, still in my bosom live,
But refined and made celestial. As angels love
I love thee still ; as Angels, in their pity,
Weep over erring mortals, I will weep
For the crime of thy affection, and will pray,
As with archangelic fervour, that repentance
May purify thy heart, so that thy sin
May be effaced and forgotten.

My dear, dear friends !

The Sun's ascent bids us to hasten onward
Lest we o'erpass the hour of sacrifice.
All shall attend me to the holy ascent ;
Thence must I pass alone. Yet not alone,
When my God calls me, and when angel bands
Do honour to my footsteps,—

Pass we on,

HADASSAH, AZUBAH, AND THE VIRGINS *pass out.*

OTNIEL *follows.*

* * * * *

THE PLACE OF SACRIFICE.

ITHRA, GALEED, AND OTHERS.

JEPHTHAH *enters, followed by* ASAHEL.

ITHRA.

Jephthah !

We beg not, we threaten not, but firmly,
 Respectfully, sincerely, nay lovingly, as Chiefs
 Of Israel, of Manasseh, and of Gilead,
 Or, would it move thee more, thy friends, thy
 brethren,
 Bound by the dearest ties, the dearest oaths,
 Between us, and thee, and God : we set before
 thee
 For the last time, the dreadful consequences

Of thy pernicious deed. Thou art our Judge,
We are thy subjects, strictly bound, and pledged
Each to the other : each to serve, to honour
Each to the utmost.—We gave thee all our trust,
Followed thee frankly ; did, and dared, as thou
Did'st bid us do, and dare.—We give thee all our
trust

Even now ; love thee, confide in thee, and will
To the uttermost limit of all human daring,
Obey thee, and defend thee.—But, strain not
Our féalty too tightly.—Thou art strong,
And brave, and valiant ; head, and hand, and heart,
One skilful warrior. Golden-tongued repute
Delights to do thee honour, and thy might,
Gives might, gives confidence, gives energy,
Even to ten-thousand mighty ones, and thou,
In each reflected, art, as one irresistible,
Unconquerable giant.—Snap but this bond
What art thou ?—— Idle were it
To paint thy uttermost helplessness. A head
Lopped from it's limbs, fœtid, offensive,
And only to be hidden.—This wilt thou be,
If in disgust, in sorrow, and in shame,
We quit thee for this crime.—A few, short years
And the dank grass upon the oblivious grave,
May whisper our reproach, and let it die :
But, Jephthah ! shall the wide, reproaching world
Pointing at thee and us with the finger of scorn,
Cry shame, and hoot us ? Shall the Gentile dogs
Moab, and Ammon, Philistia, Amalek,

Say that we burnt their bestial images,
Overthrew their altars, hewed down their sacred
 groves,
Held in abhorrence their idolatry,
And execrated their cruel sacrifices,
And then——insulted the God of purity,
Of mercy, and of pity, by a loathed,
A human sacrifice?—No, Jephthah ! no—
That God of mercy weeps ;—we weep our prayers
For thy child.

JEPHTHAH. Let me pass on, I pray you.

GALEED. Jephthah ! my little ones
Owe their lives to God, and to thee. Would God,
 that they,
And I, and all of us had never lived
To see this dreadful day !—If it were a duty,
If the oath be sacred, if it be ratified
In heaven's archives—break thy wicked oath
And throw us all upon the plenteous mercy
Of the dread Lord God, holy and merciful.

PENINAH *enters.*

PENINAH. Talk not to him of mercy : Mercy died
When he first drew breath : his heart, his soul, his
 blood,
Are seared, and exist not ; and he stands, the
 laughter

The exultation of demons—

—— Murderer !

Trample on the breasts which fed thee.

(She throws herself down in his path.)

MATTATHA *enters with the conspirators.*

MATTATHA. Strike—strike—he knows no mercy—do
not spare—

But strike—strike home—

HADASSAH *enters, OTHNIEL following, they recede.*

HADASSAH.

So, daunted stood

The Evil one, at Michael's rebuke.—Refrain,

And be thyself the exemplar of that mercy,

Which does not glibly sit upon the tongue

And leave the heart vindictive and malignant.—

And would'st thou sit upon the throne of God?

Would'st thou usurp his high prerogative

And constitute thyself the immaculate Judge?—

Search in thine own heart, wring from out it's core,

Each deep-black speck, each inmost, secret sin,

And when thine own heart is all purity,

Then judge thou righteously thy fellow man.—

In the mysterious guidance of God's hand,
Have Jephthah and his daughter been selected
As beacons for all time.—To his high will
Resigned, submissive, glorifying ever
His mercy, and his goodness: in his goodness
And in his mercy, purified from all
Terrestrial craving; living, but to render
Honour to him, and glory; ready either
For death or life as he shall bid me die
Or live in him, I bid you all, farewell.

Ye best can shew your kindness, by submission,
I my affection, as I now submit.

Father! ascend we:— Holy Angels guard us,
And God looks down with pleasure in our faith.

They ascend to the Altar.

OTHNIEL. Oh, let me rest upon thy faithful heart,
And bear this trial as a chastened child.

(He leans upon ASAHIEL.)

AT THE ALTAR.

HADASSAH *puts off her head-tire, and kneels.*

ALL. O! God of Heaven! in thy mercy hear,
O! God of Heaven! in thy mercy save,
Even in this extremity save, save her.

THE HIGH PRIEST *suddenly advancing, separates them.*

THE HIGH PRIEST. Jephthah!—Hadassah!—Children
of one faith
Heirs of one hope; alike submissive to,

Alike resolved to bow before the will,
 As it appeared to ye both, of the Lord God,
 The mighty, the terrible, the merciful,
 The true, the living, the Eternal God :—
 Yet both alike, yet all this people alike
 Erring, yea sinning, in your ignorance,
 Ignorance, darkened, deepened, intensified,
 By Israel's besetting sin, have by your sin
 Exemplified the all-foreknowledge of
 God—who, foreseeing man's rashness, had provided
 Due remedy, and in his holy law had fixed
 The redemption of such vows.—

Perform thy vow :—

But, only in that way which God's pure law
 Ensanctifies—

So Isaac was chosen,
 Was bound,—was so far offered,—but the real victim
 God had himself provided : and now, the law
 In his stead, provides for the requisite fulfilment.

Thou hast performed thy vow.—Pure of her blood
 Live thou great Jephthah, 'Judge of Israel !—
 But for thy rashness, for thy ill-advised,
 Thy headstrong swearing, thou must part for ever,
 As though she were dead, with this thy child
 beloved.

Devoted—she is Holy to the Lord.—

Pure be her body, as her soul is pure :

Live she an Angel, until Angel hosts

Convoy her back to Heaven, whence she came.—

Hear,—Hear,—O, Israel !—Bow down in the dust,
Spread sackcloth, and strew ashes on your heads :
Weep for your sins, and in oblation bring
The appointed sacrifice.—Pour, pour the blood,
Not only of fat beasts, but pour the blood
Of your own hearts, in lowliest contrition :
So shall your sanctified, renewed souls,
Drink in instruction ; so shall ye have learned
True wisdom from your chieftain's suffering ;
And Israel's daughters, dwelling upon the theme,
Shall to all future time lament with tears,
With tears of thankfulness, with tears of love,
The sad, sad tale of Jephthah's fatal vow.

* * * * *

THE CXXXVIIth PSALM.

(PARAPHRASED.)

By Babylon's, by Babylon's deep streams ;
 By Babylon's dark waters we sate down,
 And wept, in our remembrance ; wept for thee,
 Wept for thee, Sion ! Sion ! wept for thee.

On Babylon's, on Babylon's drooping trees ;
 On Babylon's drooping, melancholy trees,
 Our harps we hung. Lamentingly the wind
 Moaned, as, in misery, our harps we hung.

“ Sing us the song, sing us the joyous song,
Sing us the song of Sion, when her melody
Wakened the echoing hills.”—

“ How shall we sing,
How shall we sing the song of our Lord God
In an estranged land ? How ? How shall we sing
God’s song, in slavery ? ”—

“ If I forget thee, Sion !
If I forget thee, thee, O Jerusalem ! If I forget thee,
Thee, City of my fathers ! may my palsied hand
Forget her skill : may the revolting chords
Howl in my fingers.—If I do not remember thee,
If ever my aching memory should relax
Her clinging unto thee, may my parched tongue
Cleave to my mouth !—In my simulated mirth,
When the shrill sistrum rings, when the glancing
feet,
When the tinkling anklets gleam : O ! may my
tongue
Cleave to my mouth, if ever I thee forget,
Pride of my fathers ! loved, loved Jerusalem ! ”

“ Lord God of Hosts ! dreadful Lord God of Hosts !
O ! God of Hosts ! remember,—in thine anger
Remember Edom :—remember, in indignation,
How Edom shouted ‘ down, down, hurl her down,
Trample, trample in the dust her gorgeous towers,
Scatter her, scatter her to the winds ! ’ ”—

“ O ! dread Lord God !

Remember Edom, in thy extremest fury,
And spare not, spare not !”—

“ Daughter of Babylon !

Daughter of Babylon ! Daughter of Babylon !

Proud, haughty, fierce, and pitiless :—O ! happy he
That, in thy day of wasting misery,

Shall deal to thee as thou hast dealt to us :—

Happy, thrice happy he, who, in his vengeance,

In his exulting vengeance, shall hurl thee down

And trample thee, as thou hast trampled us :—

Blessed, thrice blessed : blessed as the blazing hosts

Of choiring Seraphim, he, whose red, righteous

wrath,

Whirleth thy children, in his abhorring arms,

And dasheth out their brains.—Glad be the rocks

That reek, in retribution, with thy blood.”

THE MOUNTAIN AND THE PALM TREE.

Many were the suitors of the Palm-tree. The Sandy Plain loved to behold her, often beguiling his solitude by watching her reflection in the mirage. The Fountains of the Oasis loved her, and the Fountains of the Oasis had not their love despised.— The Mountain of the North wooed the Royal maid. Exalted above the vapours of the world, his awful forehead glowed in the revering Sun. Chasms and precipices, yawning caverns, and frowning cliffs, added sublimity to his vastness. The Islands of the Ocean offered him their

daughters; but, he loved the Palm-tree, and spread before her his broad meads, and his ancient forests, his bubbling springs and his foaming cataracts.—The Land of her Fathers wept for the Royal maid: the Fountains of the Oasis felt their souls die within them: but the Mountain-Crest glittered in the Rising-Sun.—Her roots were snapped, the life-sustaining fibres of her affection were torn asunder; often did she look back to the Vallies of Delight;—but the Mountain-Crest was effulgent in the Mid-day Sun.—

The Forests of the North, bowed before her stately height: The Lakes of the North expanded their broad mirrors in exultation: The Torrents of the North raised the shout and the Everlasting Glaciers of the North, echoed their acclamation.—The Lover bent over her in ecstasy: the Tribute of the Earth was spread beneath her feet: the Blessings of the Heavens descended upon her graceful form:—but, the Pearl drops of the Fountains of the Oasis were treasured in her heart. Still were they treasured although they corroded her soul. They were the earliest tribute of her native land.—Her adorer saw the drooping of her beauty: he saw the glories of her height decline: he clasped her to his bosom, but—his bosom had ribs of Ice.—His hoar head grew pale in the Western-Sun.—The Mists of Winter rolled round their gloomy shades: The Royal Palm-tree fell.—The Bereaved Mountain, stiffened in despair.—

Vainly his hoarse caverns raised the Song of her Applause, for the Grey-grass whistled censure over her Narrow-House.

Houri of Earth!—taste with pure lips the Well of Instruction, and may the Honey of Counsel, brighten thy countenance, and fortify thy heart.

COUSIN DINAH.

My worthy uncle Jeremy Crabtree, was one of the genuine boys of the Old School ; a kind of ante-diluvian, like the relics of an older world peeping through younger strata, wondered at for oddity, but rarely pecked into to prove the soundness of their hearts.

Jeremy had been, in his day, a beau of the first-water ; queued, snuff-boxed, gold-trimmed, and starched to the eye-lids ; with all the modest assurance of a man of the first circle, all the beauties and toasts of former days were familiar to the eye, which, even now, gleamed at the recollection. The choicest spirit of his club, the oracle of his coffee house, the primest buck when half-primed, and, six-bottled, the truest blood that ever drew blood ; Jeremy strutted and fretted his

hour, escaped all the hair-breadth 'scapes of a man of fashion, and, at last, sobered down into a precise queer Old Bachelor.

Yet, there was a something, an undefinable something in his whole demeanour, which marked the gentleman; and strong, natural good sense had, from the varied scene, selected much of the good, and given to that which in others had been folly, an elegant piquaney and zest.

Not but that Jeremy was something of a humourist: not but that a certain degree of craziness in the pocket and the constitution, had imparted a slight tinge of querulousness to his temper; but still, when the wind was not North-East, or North-East-and-by-East, or South-West-and-by-West; nor a twinge of the gout, nor a husk of the phthisic lay snugly by watching a fit opportunity for holding up the hour-glass; Jeremy was, in the main, a good-tempered as well as a good-hearted man: and—once set in the right key, the world lay before him coloured in the ruby hue of his decanter, the warmth of humanity glowed by his snug fire-side, and old friendship, like his fat, wheezing lap-dog, patted his arm and whined satisfaction in his face.

Aunt Tabitha had long been his companion and counterpart, in her way; and, in some moment of weakness, or good humour, or compassion, or what you will, not less than three, three well-grown nieces, left to the charity of a wide world, found that wide world had a warm corner or two in it, and that Uncle Jeremy's den was not one of the worst.

Cousin Katherine happened to be the eldest, and as her good father was not overburthened with the needful, and was withal, a little economical; she had been taught all the teachable things, of then thirty years gone by, that her younger sisters might suck honey from her hive, without impairing the family stock.

But poor Kate happened not only to be so singled out, but also happened to be taught by a learned lady, for such strange things did exist even in those days; but also happened, without being much of a genius, to have a thorough good stomach for a book, and, like a true trencher-woman, cut, carved, and came again until her very finger ends stood starched out with repletion. — Greek felled Hebrew, Hebrew whipped Chaldee, Chaldee stitched Syriac, so that, what with black-letter, bobbin, and stay-tape, clever Kitty Crabtree degenerated into a kind of non-descript blue-stocking; and, I verily believe, would have hung upon hand until doomsday, had not the Parson chivalrously taken pity on her single wretchedness, and had doubtless by that time carried her off, but that, as old Pagan Troy stood a ten year's siege, Christian Kitty Crabtree could have never been so indecorous and unclassical as to have yielded earlier:—although scandal does say the first peep through the fan-sticks has, in the code, been set down as the regular proclamation of war; and at least nineteen months, ten days and three quarters of an hour had elapsed; for all that time was occupied chockful of sighs, wishes, tears, tremblings, and fits of the dolefuls, before the enemy had dared to

break ground with the first, best, and dearest verb of the Latin Grammar.

All these affairs went on smoothly and steadily, as they should do. Aunt Tabby drilled the lady, for Aunt Tabby, although a staid, veritable maiden-aunt, had not the usual feminine fierceness, and had known, or had heard of, or had dreamt of, or had thought about such like things: and Uncle Jeremy, who was a little partial to the Cloth, although he now and then slyly scarified it with a joke, or cut slap through it with a sarcasm; like a sturdy veteran cheered his recruit with the comfortable promise of a ball through his own brains, if he were to scruple popping a ball through any unlucky neighbour's who might take a fancy to his preserve: and the ten years' siege, might by good generalship possibly have been concluded in seven, and bare five-eighths, had not, most unfortunately, and inopportunately, the merry-hearted, rattle-sculled, giggling-girl Fanny, most romantically taken it into her head that, "she would please her eye, if she broke her heart," and one moon-shiny night, bade adieu to comfort, with a dashing cornet of a dashing regiment; and after dashing and flashing six weary months, until, poverty peeping in at the door, love flew out at the window, and the brute dashed the illusion from her mind, with "If you could deceive that old fool Jeremy, you may deceive me; so pack!" and the poor child, for she was only seventeen, was obliged to pack with all her sorrows, she had nothing else to pack, and to disarm the frown of irritated relationship by submission and penitence.

Poor Fanny!—The bright eye gleamed no longer. The innocent, childish wit of the giddy, almost silly girl, sank into the hopeless blank of inanition, and the widowed-wife mourned over her delirium of folly, bitterly regretting the first imprudent step; finding, now that it was too late, the anxious, solicitous, but steady yearning of parental affection, is but a momentary trial, like the rain-cloud which fertilizes nature, though it may soak us to the skin—the headlong, and transitory riot of passion, is the maddened whirlwind which leaves the bones to bleach where it's satiated rage has thrown them.

More than vexed,—agonized and tortured, they wept over the ill-fated girl, although, in her presence, kindness, and affection, soothed the pangs which they could not remove. Yet, bitter were the tears of my Aunt, and not less corrosive, though more suppressed, the sorrows of her good brother.

Time however calmed them into resignation, and when the daily paper announced that Cornet Heartless had a bullet scuttled through his scull, while he was most praiseworthily employed in trying the thickness of a Frenchman's, the rising tear which was dashed indignantly from the corner of his eyelid, eloquently depicted his detestation of the villain, subsiding into pity for the man.

“Sister,” said he, after recovering from the momentary spasm, “Sister,—Thank God the girl is released!”—and, Tabitha, most decorously subliming her pearl drops with the corner of an innocent lawn-kerchief, and, heaving her tight-laced bosom, with a sigh of

decent acquiescence, echoed the grateful exclamation; and, after sundry twitchings, and fidgettings, and hems, and ah's, and dear-me's;—for she knew not how the observation might be received, as Jeremy was rather apt to be intolerant of other folks' suggestions, and the valour of his self-opiniation was, often, not a little heightened by a fit of the dyspepsia; as if it tacitly said, "I'm vexed you should find me so weak as to snivel like a married man," a kind of animals whose punctious visitings, after refusing a new gown, or growling at Master Jacky for puking over his fire-new waistcoat, Uncle Jeremy held, or affected to hold, in his most sovereign contempt: but—

Heaven help him! Aunt Tabitha had just hemmed out her introductory "but, brother,"—when sharply turning round the hawthorn, then blooming in all its loveliness, at the edge of the lawn, appeared a young man of very gentlemanly deportment.

Apparently some eight and twenty years, and the kisses of a solstitial sun had embrowned his cheek and added fire to his dark hazel eyes. He was to them an entire stranger, but it was stranger still that poor old Chloë, whose foundered pettitoes could scarcely budge one after another, was puffing and whining, and whining and puffing, and wagging, as well as she could wag, the only stump of a tail she could call her own; and not a soul upon earth had ever before known her desert her young mistresses in their morning's search for—I beg pardon! The virtues of May-dew are now out of fashion, and dearer cosmetics than a clean, whole-

some, rough towel, and a canter before breakfast, are more laudably introduced, to the manifest benefit of perfumers' gentlemen, and gentlemen perfumers.

Now,—whether it was that Aunt Tabitha had been caught *deshabillé*, or Uncle Jeremy popped upon before he had shaven a week's growth beneath the skin, or that the whole world was struck all of a heap at Chloë's ingratitude, certain it is, a more ominous congregation of formalities, never bowed at a door, half rose from a snug mohair-lined morning chair, or bent over a half-sipped breakfast-cup, than the morning parlour of Crab-tree-hall exhibited.

A few short minutes, and but a few, elapsed, before, dashing the introductory letter to the hearth, and springing up with an elasticity which fairly confounded Aunt Tabitha, and Tom, who until that moment had been napping-it cosily in Aunty's lap: for, be it known, Tabby had not that mortal antipathy to cats, which some timid young ladies of a certain age are apt to express; heaven knows how truly, for in such mysteries I dive not: and Aunt Tab vigorously maintained her position, that the same kindness which could cherish a grateful animal would be at least equally, if not more, exerted in alleviating human suffering: but, whether that shewing were true or not, the bobs, and scrapes, and dips, and curtsies at the Church-porch seemed to bear testimony to Tabby's universal benevolence.

But, Jeremy's ecstatic, overflowing kindness, unconscious of rheumatism, or affection Tabitha-ward, had nearly capsized the old lady and the tea-tackle, as with

a warm grasp he welcomed the Grandson of a dear friend and fatherly benefactor.

Scarcely had the commotion subsided when, somewhat strangely, as if the opportunity had been watched for, entered the loves and graces of the family, blooming, each in her own way, from the zephyred glade and spangled lawn.

The eye of Dinah flashed,—and so flashed the newly-domiciled stranger's eye.

Aunt Tabitha was too intent upon Tom, who sat cursing and swearing, with all the zeal of a moss-trooper, at the full strength of his wind-pipe, which nearly cracked with the deep whough—whough—whoo oo oo oo, while all her patting and scratching, and smoothing, and coaxing, had much ado to soften his melodious howl, and to conjure out a single gray-thrum.

Little attention could she pay to dashes and flashes. But Jeremy's eye caught the glance. He had once been accustomed to such gleams ; and, laying two-and-two together, to wit, the two wags of the dog's tail, and the two flashes of the lady's eye, came to the four natural conclusions :

That, they had seen each other before :

That, "love me, love my dog," friendship with Chloe, argued anything but unfriendliness to Chloe's playmate :

That, as Chloe and he came in company, most probably they had together left their company :

That, the letter of introduction was, in downright English, a letter of recommendation :

And—if two and two had made five, probably also, he might have endeavoured to think favourably of one who fairly demanded a parley before he opened the trenches.

As it was,—it would have been a breach of hospitality, such as he could never have forgiven in himself, had he not most earnestly invited him to dinner :—and then, posted off Jeremy, as fast as two over-fattened sleek, saucy, old, short-winded pet ponies could post, to sound his friend Zachary, who having had five daughters, had fairly matched off four-fifths of them.

But, this was done by the sly.—It was only the morning's airing, and Tabitha had not sufficiently over-recovered the disaster to be equipped in time ; besides it would not have gee'd to have betrayed to any soul upon Crabtree-earth, any distrust of his own judgment.

Now, as the stranger really had only bowed, en-pas-sant, though Chloe, with a wicked eye to self-interest, and a dog's intuitive sense of dog-lovers, had only followed for nuts and gingerbread, the girls were in uttermost commotion.

Even the young widow felt a certain fluttering. Steady Katherine thought it might be better to hide a little of the stocking, with pink-bows, and lilac-sashes, green-flouncings, and blue-pinkings ; while Dinah, pinning, and basting, and sewing, and felling, and stitching, and unstitching, and unbasting, and unsewing, and unfelling, and unpinning, in striving to look disengaged just looked quite-engaged, and at last, sate down exhausted the very fac-simile of anxiety.

To do the girl justice: if Dinah was not altogether the flower of the family; the stem, and leaves, and tendrils, were so prettily twined together; there was so much of gentleness, mingled with firmness and truly maiden modesty, that an acute observer could, after some intercourse, discover more beauty in her green leaves than in the gayer tints of Fanny, and more fragrance than in the drier petals of Katherine.

She was not tall, she was not graceful, she was not beautiful, but yet, Dinah was one of the beauties after my own heart, and I could not but feel a sort of sneaking kindness, a sort of something—but I had, somewhat prematurely, shot up for seed, like a lettuce in a thunder-storm, to six feet three inches and a half, and Dinah could not, with all her shoes, muster much more than four feet eleven; so that the world's dread laugh, laughed my kindness out of countenance, and, after sundry twists and contortions, turning up of eyes, and turning out of toes, I made an honourable retreat, and took up another position, as many great generals have laudably done before me.

Now, notwithstanding all the Hereulean, or the Cleopatrean exertions; notwithstanding the anxiously-enquiring steal in the glass, only made her anxiety more apparent; Dinah prudently thought her eyes might flash again, did she enter the sitting-room inopportunely, and, like many other cowards, at the risk of encountering Henry Darlington, resolved to put a good face upon the venture, and first to encounter an

empty room, that she might with the more nonchalance meet the first curious eye which might enter.

But, Dinah had reckoned without her host, and the first enemy she saw was Aunt Tabitha herself, firmly ensconced in the elbow chair, her high-heeled shoes comfortably resting upon the massive footstool, and her high stomacher, as comfortably begirting the expiring relics of sixty years of triumph.

Clearing the little occasional mist from the mirrors of her soul, by the assistance of a tortoise-shell, gold-inlaid, cased-reading-glass ; Tabitha was beguiling the weary, weary half-hour before dinner, by decyphering the but half-intelligible scrawl ; and, by dint of stout argument, and comparison of ideas between the tortoise-shell, gold-inlaid, cased-reading-glass, and her own real, but waning optics, had tolerably well comprehended it's meaning, until she was brought hard up by such a scribble-scrabble as would have beaten any rock-scored Runic-rhyme clean hollow.

Vainly did she strive to pick and poke it out. Vainly did she rub her eyes : vainly did she rub her glass ; when, poor Dinah, inconsiderately intent upon every syllable, as, introduced by "ah, that is it," or, "it must mean that, if it mean anything," they crept indeterminately between the interstices of her white, well-worn, front teeth : guessed, for in the innocence of her little, inexperienced heart, she thought it could be nothing less, and eagerly said, "Henry Darlington, Aunt," and, catching herself, most demurely added,

"I think it is—it looks like—like a name,"—while Tabitha, who until that moment, so intent was she upon the task, knew not that a soul was near her, with a keen, look-me-through glance, echoed—"Henry Darlington—so so then, I think you know Mr. Henry Darlington."

I would have given my best blue-stone buckles, and snuff-coloured waistcoat, embroidered by Cousin Dinah's own fair hands, to have been fairly out of her scrape.

"Yes,—no—no—yes—I—I—"

"Know Mr. Henry Darlington," repeated Aunt Tabitha, bowing with the most provoking calmness imaginable.

"I think—yes—I met him—let me see—yes—I—last assizes, aunt, he handed me into—the race-course."

"Yes, and a very pretty race-course you have been handed into."

"No, aunt,—not the races—into—out of—the ball-room, aunt."

"Yes, yes, yes," nodding every curl of her well-powdered wig in accordance, as the words, with due precision, wound their way between the tongue, and the tongue's coverlet; "Yes, yes, yes—and a most delightful ball-room it was, no doubt,—But this is Jeremiah's own management, and as I have had nothing to do with it, all I can say is, that I do not consider myself responsible."

"But, aunt—my uncle."—

"I dare say your uncle approves it—no doubt."—

"Indeed, aunt."—

“ Indeed, I do believe.”

“ But, I protest—”

“ Doubtless child, there were abundant protestations, and I shall protest against Mr. Henry Darlington’s sitting at my table.”

Poor Dinah had sunk upon the sofa, in the utmost perturbation. Aunt Tabby, who really meant no ill, and, but for the love of triumph over Jeremy’s notion of prudence, would not have grieved her niece, felt a little alarmed, as Dinah, with streaming eyes, piteously cried, “ Indeed, indeed, aunt, I do not act clandestinely—I have discouraged—indeed I have—indeed—indeed,”—and, in deed and in truth, had not Tabby’s smelling-bottle, or the kind pressure against Tabby’s bosom, or the kind pat of the cheek from Aunt Tabby’s hand, exercised some potent charm, poor Dinah had made a thorough-bred flourish of it.

But, so it luckily happened, that the pat, and the squeeze, and the salts, and the “ Poor girl,” and sundry other little agreeables, known only to the initiated in the Art and Mystery of Fainting, had reassured Cousin Dinah, and a kind of hysteric, forced laugh, had reassured Aunt Tabby of her convalescence, before my Uncle, brim-full of good humour at some happy discovery, returned from his dressing-room, whither he regularly went before dinner to review his masticators, and get all ready for action.

There was a sly archness in tone, a certain waggery of manner, in which he sedulously uttered his wonder how the grandson of his college chum Bob

Darlington could have possibly thought of endeavouring to find him out: "but, as the lad has found us, we must be civil to him, if it be only for the credit of the County, and make our best bows as soon as we can decently get rid of him."

Whether some twinge of jealousy, or rivalry, bewitched me at the moment, I know not; but I felt, and blushed for the conscious difference between my listless touch, and the warm glow which animated the pressure of my friend's friend's grandson; and, though secretly reproaching myself, still found my eyes watching for interchange of look or smile.

I felt ashamed of the unworthy gratification, yet still felt that it was a gratification.

There is a silvery softness in the tone, there is a chastened pleasure in the look, there is a beautiful gentleness in the demeanour of a truly modest, good, kind-hearted girl, that is eloquent in its silence; and the friendly, sisterly carriage of Cousin Dinah, as equally bestowed upon poor pill-Garlic as upon Henry Darlington, quite disarmed me:—and, though I had not the slightest reason in my male eyes to think it, involuntarily I felt myself wishing they might be lovers; and, in the overflowing of the moment, distributed, with lordly munificence, all the wealth I might ever chance to possess, amongst their little ones.

There was none of the thoughtless levity of Cousin Fanny, which, even now, almost broke through her grief: none of the demure yet dogmatical preciseness with which Cousin Katherine looked down upon her

meritorious, moth-eaten swain: nothing of the fiddle-faddle with waist-ribbons, the fan-patting, squeezing of fingers, and all the stuffery of those who love to make love look as silly as themselves.

I grant you there was, or I was willing to think there was, a difference,—it was but a shade of difference in her dimpling, half-concealed, smile at his sallies, and the more-indulged pleasantry when Uncle Jeremy strove to set the table in a roar: and there was a winning gracefulness, mingled with a little conscious triumph, in her acceptance of his hand to our evening dance.

There was a more melting melody in her voice, mingling with his manly notes, than when bearing part with me in our favourite duet: yet, in spite of all these my fancies, I verily believe no stranger could have supposed them lovers.

To me it will ever be a lesson; and if ever I methodically fall in love, as, heaven forfend me against such a consummation of the uncomfortable, it shall be with some other Cousin Dinah.

And yet, upon reflection, Cousin Dinah's conduct was natural enough, and such as would have been pursued by any other girl of the merest common sense.

My dear Dinah, as I used to call her, for the alliteration tickled my fancy, and neither dear Kate, nor dear Fanny, sounded half so prettily. My dear Dinah, as I used to call her, when a little lath of an urchin, with my arm round her waist, and her's across my shoul-

ders, our warm cheeks gently pressing each other, we used to pore over *The White Cat*, or *Puss in Boots*, and wonder at the narrow escapes of Jack the Giant-Killer, long before I ever dreamt that damsels are the only Giant-quellers now-a-days :—my dear Dinah had shot up from three-feet nothing, into four feet eleven inches and, almost a quarter. She had not indeed the fascinating though rather childish laugh of Fanny; but there was something decidedly attractive that dimpled her slightly-coloured cheek, and lighted up those blueish-grey eyes, which otherwhiles slept in calm serenity, expressively betokening the peacefulness of her heart, and contrasting admirably with the keen, researchive look of her elder sister, whose understanding, far superior to Dinah's, was susceptible of the highest cultivation, yet unfortunately withered the female graces by shewing that she knew it was so susceptible.

Dinah, it was true, had pored her pretty eyes over the ugly, crooked hieroglyphics, and knew as much of them as more evidently learned ladies. She was mistress enough of all minor accomplishments, to go through the then customary shew-offs at an evening muster: had a scrap-book, not quite so full of wishes for husbands, and pretty namby-pamby sonnets, and odes, and true lover's knots as Fanny's; and having Aunt Tabby's excellent tutelage, who shone the very essence of a housewife, was, quite deeply enough initiated in the Arcana of the Store-room to know what is good, and what causes it to be good.

All these things, like a due course of the Mathematics, had clipped the butterfly wings of imagination, had given her habits of attention to herself as well as of attention to others, and made her one of those, who may indeed pass unnoticed in a ball-room, but in the calm, rational enjoyment of a winter's fire-side-party, are sure, without their own wish or effort, to twine round the hearts, and to win the good will of all around them.

She was not one of your gaudy dragon-flies whisking it's glittering wings in the sun-beam, and leading poor fools a will-o-wisp chase after nothing; but—in short, if any desperate body should endeavour to wade through this lengthy memorandum, and can enter at all into my feelings,—she was the lady-bird of society.—And I do love lady-birds.—There is a marvellous something in their neat, round, polished, red shards, the blackness of their corslets delicately specked with white, the tiny head, decked with unobtrusive antennæ, and a harmlessness of demeanour, that steal into my very soul. I would not harm a lady-bird for all the other insects in existence; and, hang, and doubly hang the wretch that would harm a human lady-bird.

Added to all other good, and cogent reasons, external and internal, Cousin Dinah's carriage was doubtless a little, no doubt a very little, tiny, the tiniest bit in the world, influenced by the consciousness that her features were ripening into a trifling matronliness:—that the unthinking heedlessness, which might be excused in a girl of fifteen, must be unpleasant, if not

disgusting, in one of maturer years,—and, above all, perhaps there was a secret consciousness that Henry Darlington was a man of sound, good, English common-sense; one who would look at a wife, as a being to be respected as well as loved; and, often had she heard Uncle Jeremy's caution, that few men would forget to shew respect to a young woman, unless she should first forget to respect herself.

Putting all these twos and twos together, I could not but conclude there was something perfectly natural in Dinah's conduct: there was something perfectly natural in Henry Darlington's conduct; and the only wonderment that flashed across my mind was, that out of some ten or a dozen fine, smart young fellows, fellows too who thought they lacked not a grain of understanding, not one had struck the true chord which vibrated sympathetically in her soul: and that, in one short evening they, to wit Dinah Crabtree and Henry Darlington, not only knew themselves to be adapted for each other, but that I, who very innocently, very innocently indeed, knew nothing, nothing upon my—honour, about the affinity between eyes and hearts could know so too!

As for Uncle Jeremy, he was an old stager. He knew all the bumps, rubs, finger-posts, slaps, stiles, hedges, ditches, breakers, and break-necks, and could tell, in an instant, the chastened glance of real manly affection, amongst ten thousand nods, winks, and leers:—but, that Aunt Tabitha, (for I had not then heard

of the pumping-scene) should have stumbled upon the same discovery, and not fallen, neck and neckerchief down stairs did fairly excite my astonishment.

That Chloe should have found it out, as dogs are apt enough to smell rats, was not very supernatural; but that Aunt Tabby and Tabby Tom should have tolerate! such a scene, aye and even look pleased at it!!!—for Tom, not only rubbed and purred around his legs, and gave the knee-string a passing pat, but, in the exuberance of his gratification, leaped with his cinder-sifting paws upon the smart youth's lap, and vibrating the very extremity of his tail, looked up, complacently, in Dinah's face, as if the sooty-striped rascal would have said, "I know you are good friends," and Tabitha, knitting away hard and fast, in a rough canter against time, sate peeping, and smiling, and smiling and peeping, so that I verily believe, could the old girl but have whistled off some two and forty years, it had been a moot point whether she had not trotted off into Tabitha Darlington.

These, these were wonderful!

Aye, Aye!—all these hours of enjoyment have long since passed away.

I am now verging towards my grand climacteric, without a wife to cheer or a daughter to console me. But, although I may sometimes be fidgetted by the recollection, that she might have been the sweetener of my cares, could I but have mustered courage enough to have risked my fortune; yet, when I see her enjoying heartfelt pride and pleasure in the midst of her health-

ful, cheerful, prosperous family, I cannot, no I cannot, on my soul, refrain saying, " God bless all such good girls as Cousin Dinah."

TIMOTHY CRABTREE.

CURSORY NOTES

AS TO THE

DEFENCE OF WESSEX,

AGAINST THE

PAGAN DANES AND NORTHMEN;

FROM A.D. 851, TO

THEIR DEFEAT BY

ALFRED THE GREAT,

IN A.D. 878.

CURSORY NOTES.

The object of these notes was the elucidation, to myself, of the circumstances which led to Alfred's temporary desertion of the command, which he had so often and so ably exercised. They are based upon "Asserius de Rebus Gestis Ælfredi," aided by such other lights as I have had access to.

At the time of the attack of the Pagan Danes and their coadjutors, the various bands of Northmen, and

Eastmen of the Baltic, large portions of Britain were overrun with wood, and other and very extensive portions were bog, and the whole surface appears to have been much moister than it now is.

It may fairly be assumed that under such a state of circumstances, the lines of Roman roadway, and British trackway, were generally taken, by Equestrian armies, as best adapted for their purposes, upon entering a country with which they were but ill acquainted; and that the bog land, as it much resembled their own country, did not offer any serious impediment to their footmen; and, being often flooded, their light boats could be floated over the marshes, and their heavier craft could traverse the streams; so that warlike stores of stones and other missiles, might have readily accompanied the army, and the vessels have been ready to aid their flight, when they were repulsed.

The celerity of their movements may thus be readily accounted for, and their general line of march be pretty well traced, allowing for occasional deviations for the plunder and destruction of a monastery, or some such favourite amusement.

By the same circumstances the defensive movements of the Christians, it is true, were at least equally facilitated, excepting that the long period since the Saxons had engaged in piratical expeditions would naturally have led to inferior equipment for, and less daring skill

in, maritime attack or defence; but then, that was probably more than counterbalanced by that intimate acquaintance with the country, which enabled them to thread the wild forests, and to fall unexpectedly upon their foes.

As to numbers they were however limited by a population far from abundant, and after any bloody defeat, had to await the growth of children into men before they were fit for other efforts.

The paralysing effect too of the monkish discipline has to be taken into account. The Clergy while striving to make them pious, and submissive to them, as their spiritual instructors, and, actuated by their own narrowness of mind, if not desire of dominion, would naturally discountenance, if not positively forbid, the cultivation of that daring spirit which enables men to defend their homes, as a disqualification for heaven.

The Pagans, on the contrary, were trained for war-like deeds from their earliest days. Blood, slaughter, and rapine, were not only pleasures, but were the positive means of attaining that Elysium, the Valhalla which they were taught to seek. Unequalled as bold and skilful mariners, they were almost as unequalled as warriors; and, whatever were their defeats, they recruited their numbers from every nation of the North of Europe; and there, they had the very utmost facilities in timber for shipping, in metals for weapons

and defensive armour, and in stones, from their land, for the reparation of any disaster.

The exciting conflict of Religious Opinions having once begun, their natural habits were rendered more ferocious by their desire to exterminate Christianity, and, the plunder obtainable from more fruitful lands, and from more luxurious people, made a splendid incentive to their religious zeal.

To revenge the cruel, the unmanly, the demon-like murder of Ragnar Lodbroc, might have been the object of this later attack upon Great Britain, and the sufficient cause of their indomitable perseverance, and revolting ferocity ; but religious zeal for Odin, and Valhalla, and thirst for possession of the fair fields of England, were probably the master motives.

Although their warfare might have originated in love of strife, in desire for plunder, or in thirst for revenge, it at last became a contest of Pagan, or Christian,—Scandinavia, or England.

There seem strong reasons for believing that Alfred had, by his own misconduct, rendered his people disaffected. A noble-minded people could not have meanly deserted, a brave and, generally, good king : but we should first reckon up the Saxon losses in men and property during so many years of warfare, before we condemn either them or him for their temporary, albeit

indignant submission, and we probably may find that their efforts were truly heroic.

That the country was thinly peopled is tolerably certain. Nor mountain nor marsh can maintain numerous tenants; and flat lands, while covered with dense woods, have not much greater capability. It could therefore only be upon the clearings, and in the towns, that many could subsist; and it is further to be borne in mind, that they were not merely disunited by kingdoms, or districts, each jealous of the others, but each district was disunited in itself, for the inhabitants were of various races,—Saxons and Norsemen, as freemen, and Britons, as slaves.

Some of those slaves, in gratitude to kind masters, and others, from that disposition to repel invasion which seems to be indigenous to the soil, might have aided their masters manfully; but there could scarcely have been other than a half allegiance, even with them, neutralized by some lurking hope of regaining their national superiority; while others probably would join the enemy openly. This may be taken as a certainty, in some cases at least, for we read that when the Pagans landed in East Anglia, they did not move at once upon Ella, but employed their emissaries to corrupt his people.

* * * * *

Asser says that, in 851, the Pagans, in an attack upon Wessex, it was a mere predatory attempt ; were repulsed and driven away, by Ceorl, Earl of Devon, from Wicgambeorg, (Wembury) ; yet, their defeat at that point did not send them home again, for they sailed to, and wintered in the Isle of Sheppy, waiting for reinforcements ; and three hundred and fifty ships, laden with men and weapons, entering the Thames, they at once attacked and depopulated Canterbury and London. It is, however, not certain that this was the City of London, but perhaps Sandwich, or some contiguous place, in Kent, of somewhat similar name.

The destruction effected by at least four thousand men-at-arms, for every man they had was a determined and skilful warrior, must have been very great.

Thence they marched into Mercia, probably by the Roman road, through St. Alban's, Towcester, and Daventry, into the very heart of that Kingdom, and to a point, whence, by the same description of road, they could move, with the utmost celerity, to every part of it.—There they defeated the king Beorhtulf, and the kingdom submitted to them.

Having thus weakened Mercia, by slaughter and plunder, they returned through London, undoubtedly with that usual amount of devastation, which invariably accompanied the Pagan Northmen ; and marched

into Wessex, to assail the Monk-king, probably deeming him an easy prey ; doubtlessly traversing the Roman road from Southwark, (Sudr-verki) towards Chichester.—Here, however, they failed in their object.—Ethelwulf, although he had been a Monk, yet had the true spirit of a Saxon King ; and, gathering an army, commanded by himself and his son Ethelbald, he attacked the Pagans directly that they entered the forest of Anderida in the Weald district, then thickly covered with oak-trees, as the soil, if left to itself, still naturally produces that tree abundantly.

An entrenchment, supposed to have been occupied by them previous to the battle of Aclea, (the oak-field) now Ockley, in Surrey, is still visible upon a considerable and nearly circular eminence, enclosing eleven acres of ground, and having a double trench, excepting upon the South-East, South, and South-west, where the hill-sides are steep.

Here the two armies fought ; and, Asser asserts that such an enormous slaughter had never been known before or since.—Flint-arrow heads, heart-shaped, and an inch-and-an-half long, are still met with in the adjoining fields.—Asser's remark as to the enormous slaughter, may either be taken as comparative to the numbers engaged, or it may have been that the Pirate-Kings, who then swarmed on every water, had, like the rapacious birds of heaven, been lured to the expected plunder, and swollen their army.

It is also said that at Battley, or Battle-bridge, in Surrey, a carnage of the Pagans, by the women, occurred after their defeat at Ockley.—But, whatever may have been the loss of the Pagans, the Christians must have suffered severely in proportion.

That large re-inforcements had joined the Pagans, is highly probable; for, Asser notes that a great army of them was beaten by Athelstan the King's son, viceroy of Kent, and Earl Ealhere, at Sandwich, where they lost nine ships; and as the loss of ships was, in those days, attended by the destruction of nearly all the crew, for the ship was scarcely ever surrendered until the warriors and rowers had all been swept away, it is not unlikely that a nearly equal loss was sustained by the Christians.

We have thus three great battles in 851—2.

* * * * *

In 853, as if it was not sufficiently destructive of the people to combat with such ferocious invaders, Burrhed, the successor of Beorhtulf, after destroying the British King, Merfyn Frych, in battle, still warred against his successor Roderic Mawr; and Ethelwulf, the Christian monk, was so unjust as to join his forces to those of Mercia.—They swept through Wales, and even pene-

trated to Anglesea; but, against such a foe, their victories must have been attended with severe loss to themselves, in men whom they could so ill spare.—But —they were victors!—and Ethelwulf, in his exultation, strengthened their unholy alliance by giving his daughter Ethelswitha (Alfred's sister) in marriage to the Mercian,—the nuptials being right royally celebrated at Cippanhamme, in Wiltshire.

In 853, also, the Pagans made an irruption into Thanet, but were encountered by Ealhere, Earl of Kent, and Earl Huda, or Uuada, of Surrey.

At first the Christians were successful; but, at length, many on both sides, having been slain or drowned, and both the Christian Earls having been killed, the Pagans remained victors.

In 855, a large army of Pagans passed the whole winter in the Isle of Thanet; but they do not appear to have attacked the main land, nor do the Christians seem to have attempted to drive them out.

Ethelwulf went, in this year, with a large retinue to Rome, taking with him his favourite son Alfred, who had also been sent thither, in 853, with a numerous train of noblemen and commoners, at which time Pope Leo the Fourth anointed him as a King, and either adopted him as a Son, or as a God-son.

Ethelwulf ridiculously displayed his wealth, at Rome, by giving to the Pope a crown of gold, two golden vessels, (Baucas), a sword decorated with gold, two golden images, with four Saxon dishes of silver gilt. Besides this he made gifts of gold to the clergy, and of silver to the laity.

This unwise ostentation was followed up by his more foolishly, upon his return through France, taking to himself a young wife, Juthitta, daughter of Charles the French King, and grand daughter of Charlemagne ; and consummating his folly by placing her upon the throne with him, and thus insulting his nobles, and his people.

This inconsiderate uxoriousness, led to instant and irreparable dissension in his kingdom : for, that, in consequence of their disgust at the infamously vile conduct of Eadburgh, queen of Mercia, and wife of Beorhtric, the people of the kingdom of Wessex had determined that they would no longer suffer a king's-wife to sit upon the throne, nor even to be called Queen.

Ealhstan, Bishop of Sherborne, Ethelwulf's long tried friend, and able Prime-Minister, and Eanwulf the Earl of Somerset, on that account, felt themselves justified in combining to depose Ethelwulf, and to place his son Ethelbald at once upon the throne.—The nobles, however, would not suffer the old man to be

wholly dethroned ; but, by a compromise, it was arranged that Ethelbald should be king of Wessex, and that Ethelwulf should retain Kent, Surry, and Sussex.

Although this division did not last long, for Ethelwulf died in 857 : it must have sadly weakened the bond of union between king and people, and so far have materially affected the defensive strength of the kingdom.

The affection of the people was still further lessened by the disgraceful and degrading conduct of Ethelbald, who soon after his kind, but weak, father's death, married Juthitta, that father's widow.

It has indeed been said that upon the exhortation of Saint Swithin, he parted from her. Asser, however, does not say so, but writes that he reigned rashly, or in a headstrong manner, two years and a half, after his father's death, and died in 860.

She did not quit England until after Ethelbald's death ; and she seems not, by any means, to have been fastidiously delicate in her choice of a husband.—First she married a man at least old enough to have been her father : then she married that old man's son ; and after his death, having been taken prisoner by Baldwin, Earl of Flanders, she without hesitation, and at once, consented to become his wife.

And yet, this shameless woman has had the repute of having been the motive cause of our Alfred's persevering attempts to acquire book-learning.

Let us just test the truth of this.—It is said in Asser's work, that Alfred was twelve years old at the time of his beginning to read.—Let us try if a little consideration will not manifest that there must be some sad mistake in this story.

When Ethelwulf married Juthitta, in 856, Alfred was in the eighth year of his age, and when his brother Ethelbald died in 860, Asser clearly says that Alfred was then in the twelfth year of his age.

He says also that, beyond all his brethren, he was excessively beloved by his father and mother—that he was too much beloved by all—that he was uninterruptedly brought up in the King's Court,—increasing in infantile and boyish age,—that he was seen to be more comely in form, and more gracious in look, words, and manner than any of his brethren,—that excelling all others, from his very cradle, in the nobility of his nature, and in desire of knowledge, he filled his exalted mind with information, and rapidly acquired the arts of life—terms not very descriptive of an unlettered child:—he then adds, yet to the disgrace of his negligent parents and tutors, he remained unacquainted with letters until or beyond his twelfth year.

Now, it must be borne in mind that, in relating the first inducement for this acquisition, Asser distinctly uses the words "*mater sua*," his own mother, and it seems to me very highly probable, if not indisputably evident, that it really was his own mother, and not Juthitta, to whom the credit is due; and I conceive that the error lies in the mis-statement of his age at the time of this occurrence.

Asser does not say at what time his mother died. Ethelwulf, the monk, could not well have been married earlier than 836, the year in which his father Egbert died, without leaving other living issue.

Ethelwulf's wife Osburgh, Alfred's own mother, is described as "an exceedingly religious woman, of superior capacity, and of noble lineage." She bare to Ethelwulf threemale children before Alfred, who was born in 849: but there must have been a considerable interval between the births of the elder children and Alfred, for that in 851, Ethelbald, in conjunction with his father, fought the Pagans: in 851 or 852 Ethelstan was vice-roy of Kent: in 853 Ethelswitha was married to the King of Mercia, at which time if we take her to be the eldest born she could not have well been more than sixteen, unless we understand the marriage to have but a splendid betrothal.

The youthfulness of the boys, when warrior or when vice-roy, would not much affect the question, because

that in those days, they took the field at a very early age, but there could scarcely have been less than twelve years difference between Ethelbald and Alfred, and eleven years between Ethelstan and Alfred.

If Osburgh died in 855, that is, one year before Ethelwulf's second marriage in October 856. Alfred would then have been in his seventh year, his eldest brother about nineteen, and Ethelstan,* or Ethelbert, about eighteen.

It might well have been that a pious and well-informed mother, of noble birth, might have striven, by an attractive inducement, to allure her children into the acquisition of knowledge; and, the Book-man Asser, might well have felt it to have been disgraceful, that Alfred, a King's son and the pupil of a Bishop should not have been able to read a Saxon poem even in his seventh year:—mind, Asser does not say he could not read; it is most probable that he had been taught to read the Church-language, Latin, by Swithin; but he could not read a Saxon poem, a language not much in

* In page 6, Asser says Ethelstan the son of Ethelwulf the king, but in page 14 he gives the name of Ethelberht as the second son of Ethelwulf, and page 15 Ethelred appears to have been the third son. As Ethelstan and Ethelberht are both mentioned in connection with Kent, Surrey, and Sussex, it is possible they were the same person, unless we can suppose Ethelstan to have been an illegitimate son.

use among Churchmen ; and Asser distinctly says, he took the book in his hand, went to a master and read it, and then returned to his mother and recited it.

Indeed it is with me a question whether the reading was a matter of difficulty, that the mother's offer was not to him who could most readily read, but to him who could first understand, and recite the poem, both of them very distinct things from merely reading it.

There would be nothing inconsistent in Osburgh, their own mother, stimulating her boys of seven up to nineteen years of age, to recite a Saxon poem:—but, if we take the circumstance to have occurred when Alfred was in the twelfth year of his age, and that Juthitta was his Minerva, there are these very material difficulties to be surmounted.

When Alfred was in his twelfth year, Ethelwulf was dead, Juthitta was married to Ethelbald.—Ethelbald must have been about twenty-four years, and Ethelbert about twenty-three years old.

It is not very probable that, high-spirited Saxon chieftans, would, at such ages, have been sitting pinned even to their own mother's knee, and much less so that they would have been attendant upon a woman who, in Alfred's twelfth year was living in an unchristian if not an incestuous state with his elder brother:—nor is it very likely that Juthitta would have assumed au-

thority to make such an offer to her own husband and stepson, the King of Wessex, or to the amiable and honourable Ethelbert, her stepson, and brother-in-law, then either King or Vice-King of Kent, Surrey, and Sussex.

Either these difficulties must be explained away, or we must restore to Osburgh the credit of awakening her son Alfred's desire for tuition, and strip Juthitta of her borrowed plumage.

It appears to me that, the origin of this popular misconception, can very readily be accounted for.—The Roman Numerals VII, if hastily written, may very easily have the two sides crossing each other, even but by a trifle, yet quite enough to mislead a transcriber, and lead him to write XII; and the error having once occurred there would be very little chance of its rectification by a reverse error, for it requires much less effort of the will to make an X than to make a V, as any person may convince himself by trying it rapidly. I therefore am led to believe that the popular error did really commence in this way, and became perpetuated by other transcribers, who, like modern law-writers, simply copied, as faithfully as they could, the words before them, without enquiring into their agreement or discordance with the body of the book.

A.D. 860, was the first year of Ethelbald's reign, between which, and 864, a large army of Pagans de-

populated, or laid waste the City of Winchester: but, as they were returning to their ships with vast spoil, Osric, Earl of Hampshire, and Ethelwulph, Earl of Berkshire, manfully intercepted them.—In a well conducted fight they instantly slew the Pagans, throughout the City; and when these could no longer resist, they took prisoners those who had been terrified into flight.

It is probable that the Pagans had landed either at or near to Southampton or at Porchester, from each of which places a Roman road led directly to Winchester; but, while they were employed in plundering the place, it would seem that the Earl of Berkshire, also having the facilities of similar roads, marched directly upon the City, from Silchester or other point in his County, for that no less than three, if not four, roads in the Northern half of Hampshire, united at Winchester.

In 864, the Pagans wintered in Thanet, and made, as was thought by their dupes, a lasting and honest treaty with the people of Kent, who had therein engaged to pay them a sum of money for the ensurance of the league. The Pagans however, having thus craftily disarmed suspicion, secretly, and in the night, burst from their camp, broke the treaty and spurning at the promised money, for they well knew that they should get more by plunder than they could gain peaceably, wasted the whole of the eastern part of Kent.

In 866, Ethered, or Ethelred, acceded to the throne, and in this year, a large army of Pagans arrived from Danubium, (probably Denmark,) and wintered in East-Anglia, with the avowed object of avenging the murder of Ragnar Lodbroc.

One account is, that Ragnar having been wrecked upon this coast, was murdered by order of Edmund the King of East-Anglia; but Turner is of opinion that he was taken prisoner and murdered by Ella, King of Deira, or Northumberland,—Lodbroc is said to have landed from an open boat, during a storm, at Reedham, a patch of marsh land on the Yare, in Norfolk.—He might, it is true, have really been wrecked upon the flat coast of Norfolk, and thence fought his way into Northumbria, and there have been conquered, and murdered by Ella.—Although Saints have been manufactured out of very unfit, and very questionable materials, there does not seem to have been anything in Saint Edmund's character to countenance a suspicion that he could have committed so ferocious, so demon-like a crime as his herdsman attributed to him; but Ella, an unprincipled usurper, might well have been capable of so acting to an equally cruel and remorseless invader; and the landing of the Pagans in East Anglia might have been done, advisedly, for the purpose of lulling Ella's suspicion of their real object.

They wintered in East Anglia; obtained from it's King, horses to mount the greater part of their war-

riors, that country being productive of good horses, and in the spring of 867, they sailed to Deira.

They are reputed to have landed at Durnsley-bay, near Whitby, under Hubba, and at the Peak, near to Stope-brow, under Inguar.—Each chieftain is said to have erected the standard “Reafan” upon the top of a very high cliff; and they have been accused of having destroyed Streanshalh, or Whitby, where there was a Watch-Tower.

Possibly this landing was but a stratagem further to destroy suspicion, and to give their attack the character of a mere predatory excursion. It might have had the object of drawing the defenders away from York and Beverley, or it might have been an error, and that, finding the coast inconvenient for landing their horses, although had they done so, there was a Roman road to lead them towards their prey; they re-embarked, and running past Flamborough and the Spurn-head, proceeded up the Humber, and landed either near to Kingston upon Hull, or at Brough, from both of which points, Roman roads led past Beverley and directly to York, and thence onward to Ripon, which place they destroyed.

Turner says they marched from East Anglia into Deira; and indeed, a part of their force might have passed by a Roman road from Norfolk to Huntingdon,

and thence Northward, along the main road leading from London to York.

The same kind of road would also have led them on to the Tyne, and into the now West Riding; so that they had but to follow these lines, even at a hazard as to their real termination, with a certainty of their leading them most directly to some object worth attacking and plundering.

In 868, they moved from York to Mercia, into which three Roman roads ran. Having plundered the country they wintered at Nottingham.

In compliance with Burrhed's supplication, Ethered and Alfred marched to Nottingham, having four lines of Roman roadway to facilitate their rapid movement, which having alarmed their Pagan opponents, they made a mutual treaty, the Pagans returned to York, and Ethered and Alfred returned to Wessex.

This was then the state of affairs between the invaders and the defenders of Wessex.—A terrible famine had scourged the land and weakened its defensive population:—Northumbria, with Yorkshire, had been completely conquered:—The Pagans had distinctly proved that, excepting it were supported by extrinsic aid, Mercia was entirely at their mercy:—and that Wessex was the only real obstacle to their final success.

Wessex was then the last refuge of England's freedom.

In 870, the Pagans resumed their task.—Hatred of Christianity, and lust for the goodly plunder which was spread before them, led them into Lincolnshire.—It's marshes, and streams, and dykes, facilitated the progress of their craft, on the one hand, and, upon the other, it's Roman roadway through Lincoln and Stamford guided their horsemen.—They devastated the country; destroyed the monastery and slew the monks of Bardeney, which was situate in a marsh upon the river Witham; and entered Kesteven, at Michaelmas:—but here, at the very extremity of the county, and in a land quaking beneath the foot-tread, they met with a most determined resistance.

To save their own homes, and doubtless urged on by the superiors of the Monasteries, to defend those sacred places from spoliation; Earl Algar, to whom Spalding belonged, with his two seneschals Wibert and Leofric, and all the youth of Hoiland, and those of Deeping, Langtoft, and Boston, three hundred in all; with the aid of two hundred from Croyland monastery; of Morcard, Lord of Brunne, (midway between Market Deeping and Folkingham,) with his undaunted family; of five hundred under Osgot, Sheriff of Lincoln; of five hundred under Tolius, an ancient warrior who had assumed the cowl; of Harding of Rehal and the citizens of Stamford, and men from Sutton and Gedney; stayed their progress for two days.

The Pagans appear to have entrenched themselves at a spot South-east of Folkingham.

Upon the first day, three of the Pagan kings were slain, and were buried early the next morning at Trekingham, two miles north from Folkingham:—but upon the second day, Godrun, Bacseg, Oskitul, Halfden, and Amond, with Frenar, Inguar, Ubbo, and the two Sidrocs, with their forces, and bringing in immense spoil and numerous prisoners, rejoined their comrades.

Towards the close of a well-fought day, in which the cool, brave, and well-compacted Saxon footmen had constantly repelled the northern horsemen, the Christians lost their advantage by a feigned flight of the Pagans; they unfortunately, broke from their disciplined order, notwithstanding the urgent entreaty of their commanders, and were then easily conquered in detail, and were nearly all slain.

Their cowardly king had not even attempted to assist them:—it was the daring defence of private patriotism against local hostile aggression.

The fugitives only escaped by the friendly aid of woods and marsh lands. Croyland and Peterborough monasteries were despoiled, and burnt, and all their inmates brutally butchered.

Thence the Pagans, and also by a Roman roadway, reached Huntingdon, whence, by a Roman road they reached Cambridge, and thence passed along a branch road to Ely, where the nuns heroically mutilated their faces to preserve their chastity ; or, part of the Pagans might have crossed the fens, or have gone in boats from Peterborough to Ely.

By the course of the Lesser Ouse, if not by some line of, yet untraced, Roman road, across Suffolk, but which is met with in Norfolk between Castor, (*Venta Icenorum*) and Thetford ; they marched on to Thetford, then a Royal residence, and Hoxne (*Eglesden*) at that time the residence of Edmund the King ; and there they were joined by Ingwar and Hubba, who had returned from an irruption into Scotland.

Turner doubts at least, if not disbelieves, that Edmund defended himself at all, but Asser and others say that he fought a sanguinary battle with them at Snareshill, near to Thetford, but having been beaten, he became dispirited, resigned himself to that which he deemed to be the will of Providence, and resolved never to fight again.

His martyrdom is said to have taken place at Framlingham, but he was buried at Hoxne.

Now all was ready for a determined dash upon Wessex.

The Pagan army had indeed been temporarily reinforced by Ingwar and Hubba ; but, having established Godrun as King of East Anglia, they returned to Northumbria.

In 871, the Pagans under Halfden and Bacseg, quitted East Anglia, and, attacking Wessex, penetrated as far as to Reading.—Their line of march probably ran along the Roman roadway from Venta Icenorum or Castor, in Norfolk, which lies between Thetford and Hoxne, to Sitomagus in Suffolk, and thence to Colonia or Colchester, in Essex, for doubtless there were roads to connect those stations :—Thence they had to pass through Essex to London, and thence, by the continuous Roman road across Middlesex, into and across Berkshire, towards Silchester, from which they probably made a short cut across the country to Reading, of which they possessed themselves.

It is not unlikely that the circumstance of it's being a Royal-town, led them to make their dash first upon it, that it's conquest might the more intimidate the populace.

According to the Danish custom,—for, if one can form a just opinion from the *Heimskringla*, entrenchment does not appear to have been often resorted to by Norsemen, who only stood up like good bold fellows behind their shields, and sometimes even fenced a field round with wands, and there fought it out honestly ;—the Pagans set to work to entrench themselves by cut-

ting a ditch from the Kennet to the Thames, and, upon the third day, merely leaving part of their army to complete the trench, the larger part rode out to plunder the country.

Although the irruption was manifestly a surprise, Ethelwulph, the brave Earl of Berkshire, intercepted them at Englefield, about five miles west of Reading. A desperate battle ensued. After a hard and long struggle, one of the Pagan Earls, and the greater part of their band having been slain, the others fled, and the Christians, in Asser's phrase, remained masters of the field of death.

After four days, Æthered the King, and Alfred his brother, having assembled their men, joined their forces and marched towards Reading.—As Wantage was a Royal-town, and as Lambourne was Alfred's own property, it is not unlikely that the brothers were each then resident in his own place, and that they united and marched along the Portway, or the Ridgeway, to the Thames, and then, by it's banks, to Reading.

They appear to have turned the Danish trench, which might have been unfinished, to have slain or overthrown all the Pagans who were withoutside of, and to have penetrated to the very gate of the Citadel.—The Pagans, however, did not fight slothfully.—Bursting from all their gates like wolves, Asser says,

all their men rushed to the fight. Fiercely and cruelly it was contested on either side, but at last the Christians turned their backs and the Pagans ruled over the place of death.

Among others Earl Ethelwulph was slain there.

After another four days, the Christians vexed with grief and shame, in right good will marched with all their forces against the Pagan army, which had moved forward and was posted at *Æscesdun*, or the Hill of Ash trees.

Carrying out their principle, of striking at the enemy's head by attacking the Royal Towns, they appear to have followed up the retreating army of the Christians, and to have made a charge upon Wantage with all their force, for that it was a not only a Royal town, but the especial patrimony of the West-Saxon Kings.

Ethered and Alfred would naturally desire to protect such an important point. It is probably no unreasonable conjecture that the Pagans, moving along the Southern bank of the Thames, took possession of the Ridgeway, and that the Christians occupied the Portway, both which ancient roads lie nearly parallel with each other. The high range of the Chalk hills along which they run was admirably fitted to shew both the invaders and the defenders, the beautiful country for

which they had to contend : on the north from the vale of White Horse to Abingdon, with its tempting Abbey near to the Thames : on the south and east, the rich lands reaching to Windsor on the east, and to the downs of the south of Berkshire, and of the north of Hampshire on the South.

The exact place of conflict cannot now be expected to be ascertained, but any part of the Ridgeway would probably bear out Asser's statement that Alfred charged the Pagans from the lower ground.

The Pagans divided themselves into two bands, and prepared their Testudo or Shield-fence, and levelled their lances, giving the command of one band to their two kings Halfden and Bægsceg (as Asser here writes it) and of the other to all their Earls.

The Christians, perceiving this, also divided themselves into two bands, and as rapidly formed their shield-fence.—Alfred, however, with his band, quickly reached the battle ground, while his brother, Ethered, remained within his tent, hearing mass, and earnestly declaring that he would not quit it until the priest should have finished the prayers ; and that he would not desert the service of God for that of men.

The Christians had decided that Ethered, with his forces, should engage in battle with the two Pagan Kings, and that Alfred, with his cohort, should combat all the Pagan generals.

Things being so disposed on either side ; the King having remained too long in prayer, and the Pagan army having reached the place of contest ; Alfred, then only second in command, still felt that he could no longer delay making the attack. He had only to choose between receding from the fight by a backward movement, or to throw himself upon the enemy before his brother's arrival in the field.

Asser says, that, daringly as a wild boar, he at length, as they had before proposed, although the king had not yet arrived, directed the Christian forces against the opposing army, and relying upon the divine will, and nobly supported by his officers, and with his shield-fence compacted in due order, he at once advanced his standard against the enemy.

But it is to be observed that the place was very irregular and ill-fitted for a warlike charge ; for the Pagans had pre-occupied the higher and more advantageous ground, while the Christians had necessarily to direct their attack from the lower ground.

It happened that at that place there was only one, and that a very low Thorn-tree, around which the opponents fought ; those acting wrongfully, and these combating for their country, for life, and for all its enjoyments, fiercely intermingled their battle with every inciting outcry.

When, with exceeding hatred and cruelty on both sides, they had for some time fought closely, the Pagans providentially not being able to withstand the impetuosity of the Christians ; and the greater part of their force having been slain, and one of their two Kings, and five Earls, and many thousands of the Pagan army having fallen dead upon the field, they became scattered every where over the whole extent of the champaign of *Æscesdun*, and fell dead in heaps throughout it's width and length.

In that battle were slain King *Bøgsceg*, Earl *Sidroc* the elder, Earl *Sidroc* the younger, Earl *Osbern*, Earl *Fræna*, and Earl *Hareld*, and the whole Pagan army was thrown into flight, throughout the night, and even until the following day. The Christians pursued them until night, and overthrew them everywhere ; a remnant, however, escaping, and reaching their Citadel in *Reading*. This flight was more than twenty miles, as the crow flies.

It is not improbable that, as at that time great part of every county was woodland, the whole range of chalk hill, although itself bare, excepting of this solitary thorn tree, the place of which is irrecoverably lost, was known by the name of *Ash-down* ; and that all the lower ground between this range and *Reading*, and even to *Windsor*, was the Champaign or meadow-land of *Ash-down*, clad here and there with those trees.

After fourteen days, Ethered and Alfred alone, that is without their Earls, marched with an assembled force to Basenga, to fight the Pagans, who here encountering and obstinately resisting them for a long time, gained the victory and remained masters of the field.

After this battle, another army, from beyond sea, joined company with the Pagans.

By every engagement, whether victorious or defeated, the King of Wessex lost his warriors, and was every day less able to recruit his strength; as every day decreased the number from which fighting men could be selected, in his own land; and all external aid was cut off by the submission of the other kingdoms to their foes: while, whatever numbers the Pagans lost, they were soon compensated by fresh swarms, eager for blood and plunder.

Asser does not mention it, but Turner, upon the authority of the Saxon Chronicle, says, that two months after this, the Christians fought another battle with the Pagans at Merton, which he conceives to have been near to Wallingford, in Berkshire, and that here Ethered received a mortal wound, and that, after Easter, he died in consequence of it, and was buried at the Monastery of Wimbourne in Dorsetshire.

Turner's conjecture is so highly probable that it may

be taken to be true, and that the general conception of the fight having occurred at Merton, in Surrey, must be erroneous.

It is highly probable that, after their defeat at Basing, the brothers retreated to their defensive line in the chalk hills. It is equally probable that the Pagans, having been reinforced by fresh men, and burning for revenge, moved forward as early as they could.

Ethered and Alfred, not unnaturally, would have taken up their old line of defence upon the Portway, if not upon the Ridgeway. Their army resting upon the Thames would place them directly in advance of North Moreton and South Moreton, a strong and judicious position ; as one by which they would, if successful in their defence, secure the Monastery of Abingdon from plunder, or by which, if defeated, they could fall back upon Wantage.

They were not only defeated, but their king was mortally wounded. — This circumstance might have deranged their defensive plan.—His piety of character would have led, and probably did lead him, to seek refuge in some religious house, where the best medical aid of the day was to be obtained, and where he could have spiritual consolation and Christian burial.

Abingdon Monastery was near, but then it was un-

safe.—By the Portway, he might have been conveyed close to the Ridgeway.—By the Ridgeway, a Roman roadway could be reached, which ran through Winchester and Andover; from Andover a road reached to Old Sarum: and from Old Sarum it ran southward to Poole, passing close by Wimbourne minster.

Paralysed by the strenuous defence of the Christians, the Pagans might have hesitated to pursue an enemy capable of making such desperate efforts; and, tempted by the sight of Abingdon Monastery, whose plundering by them is recorded as having occurred in this year; they may readily be supposed to have staid there by the way, to recreate themselves with a little slaughter and incendiarism, and to refresh themselves with the good cheer of the lazy, fat monks.—Such was with them a perfectly usual course, and in their own phrase, “delightful as the first kiss of a young bride.”

Having satiated themselves, they had but to follow the same Roman roads by which Ethered escaped.

Alfred, to protect the Monastery, and to save his brother's remains from insult, had but to retrace his path along the same road; and, their meeting at Wilton, upon the Guilou, now the Willey, would thus be readily accounted for.

Wilton lies but about two miles, West by South, of Old Sarum.

In this battle at Wilton, the Pagans again practised their favourite trick of breaking the disciplined array of their enemy by a simulated flight.—Alfred had a very unequally less number than the Pagans, yet he fought so resolutely, that, finding it useless to continue the attacks which they had made upon the Christians, throughout the greater part of the day, they turned their backs.—The Christians becoming scattered in their pursuit, were suddenly turned upon, and lost the victory.

To account for the inferior numbers of the Christian army, Asser remarks that the Saxons had fought eight battles within the one year, 871, against the Pagans, besides the innumerable daily and nightly skirmishes, in which Alfred, his leaders, and his people had been indefatigably engaged: in which, he observes that, how many thousands of the Pagans fell is only known to God, excepting that, in those eight battles, one King and nine of the Pagan generals fell.

If many thousands of the Pagans had fallen, many thousands also of the Christians had been slain, until the Kingdom of Wessex must have been nearly denuded of fighting men.

Asser expressly states that Alfred's force in this battle was much too unequal in numbers to the Pagan army: but, even although defeated, and although so much inferior in numerical strength, the Christians

were still strong enough, and their courage had made them so sufficiently respected, as to enable them to negotiate, and to conclude a peace with the Pagans, upon condition that they should quit Wessex.

In pursuance of this compact, the Pagans did retrace their steps to London, and there they wintered ; and with them the abject Mercians made a treaty of peace, in 872.

But, in 873, the Pagans, having quitted London, and marched into Northumbria, and there wintered, in the district of Lindesey (Lincolnshire), the Mercians had to make peace with them again.—This shews not only the utter prostration of spirit into which the Mercians had fallen ; but also how little reliance could be placed in treaties with the Pagans, when, without the slightest quarrel having been recorded, it became necessary to make peace, in two successive years ; unless indeed it were that they were merely articles of truce for definite periods.

The track of the Pagans, in this movement, probably was by the Roman roadway through Hertfordshire, the Western side of Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, the Eastern corners of Northamptonshire and Rutlandshire, and through Kesteven into Lindesey.

In 874, the Pagans quitted Lindesey, probably by the Roman road leading from near Lincoln through

Agelocum or Segelocum (Littleborough), across the Northern end of Nottinghamshire, past Bawtry and through Doncaster, and which struck into the line of the Ickneild street, at, or near to Wakefield, and thence led directly on to Hreopedum or Repton, whose monastery they plundered, and in which was the sacred Mausoleum of the Mercian Kings.

Here they wintered.—Burghred the Mercian King not only fled his kingdom, but went beyond sea, to Rome.

After his expulsion, the Pagans subdued the whole kingdom of Mercia, and set up Cleolwulf, one of Burghred's officers, as their tributary, upon the condition that they might resume it upon whatever day they should be pleased to name; and he gave hostages, and pledged himself by oaths, that he would in nowise withstand their will, but obey them in all things.

The utter degradation of Mercia could scarcely be pourtrayed in more disgraceful terms.

In 875, the Pagans, having thus secured it's unqualified submission, quitted Hreopedun (Repton) in Mercia, and divided themselves into two bands.—One of these, under Halfden, took the Roman road which led them directly through Isurium, (Aldborough) and Cat-turactonium, (Catterick) and Magœ, (Cliffe) and Vinovium, (Binchester) and Glanobanta, (Lanchester) and

Vindomara, (Ebchester) to Corstopium, (Corbridge near to Hexham :) whence the main line led them through Brabitancum and Brenevium (Rocester) by Carter-fell towards Jedburgh ; and an Eastern branch, from Corstopium (Corbridge) across the Roman wall, carried them Northward near to Dalia Alanni, (Berwick) and across the Tweed.

Hœlfden wintered on the banks of the Tyne, and subjugated Bernicia, or the remainder of the then extent of Northumberland and also the South of Scotland, destroying the Picts and the Stratduttensi, or Strathclwyd Britons.

The British King fled to Ireland from their attacks, but Hœlfden having most treacherously slain Olaf, one of his own officers, himself fell in a battle with the race of the Fingalls, in 876.

The other band, under Gothrun, Osceytil and Amund, three of the Pagan Kings, marched to and wintered in Cambridge.

The Roman roadway, by which they reached Ratœ (Leicester), does not appear to have been traced out ; but, seeing that such a road is traceable from Breme-tonacæ (Overborough) near to Kirkby-Lonsdale, in Westmorland, to Coccium, (Ribchester) and through Blackburn to Mancunium (Manchester) ; and thence, through Stockport, and also near by Chapel-in-the-

Firth, within four miles of, and pointing almost directly to the Roman station at Buxton; and, seeing that the Roman roadway from Melandra Castle, near to Glossop, passes through the fort at Buxton, and has thence been traced to Brassington, and points in a direct line to Derventio, upon the Ickneild street, which is thirteen miles distant from Brassington, there can scarcely be a reasonable doubt that, however now lost, there was a Roman road, which, connecting Derventio (near to Derby) with Ratæ, (Leicester) upon the Fosseway, and the Via-Devana, completed the one grand line of communication, from Lancashire to Essex, even if the same line did not run through Westmoreland and Cumberland, by the way of Comangium, (Watercrock near Kendal), and Oleacrum, (Old Carlisle) to Tunnocellum upon the Solway:—unless, indeed, it passed from Comangium, nearly in the present line of mail-road, to Penrith and so on to Carlisle, whence Roadways led off to Virosidum (now Maryport) with Derventione (Pap-castle), and to Axelodunum, Cabrosentum, and Tunocellum (Bowness), upon the Solway Frith—and, as a Trunk line, on to Scotland.

Assuming that, with so high a degree of probability to justify it, there was a Roman road from Derventio to Ratæ, the march of the Pagans upon Cambridge was in one uninterrupted line.

It would seem that, in the same year, some predatory Pagans had threatened Wessex, for we read that,

in 875, Alfred fought with six Pagan vessels, and took one of them, and that the others escaped by flight : but it is not improbable that they were mere roving plunderers unconnected with the invading Kings.

Having remained at Cambridge throughout the winter, probably collecting other troops and providing vessels for their meditated attack ; in 876, the Pagans, under their three Kings Gothrun, Osscytil, and Amund, quitted the City by night, and entered the Castle of Wareham, whose sacred Monastery stands between two rivers, the Fraw (Frome) and the Terente (Piddle) in the County of Durngueis (Britannice) or Thornsœta, (Saxonice) now Dorsetshire, and which is most safely situated, being only approachable on the Western side, where it adjoins to the main-land.

Turner's impression is that they went by Sea to Wareham, while others have assumed that they moved overland.—Asser does not state which way they took.—It is more than probable that Turner is correct, in understanding that they sailed to Wareham ; because that it not only can scarcely be supposed they could have traversed the extent of country between Cambridge and Wareham, which is about one hundred and fifty miles as the crow flies, without encountering their vigilant adversary ; but, it would seem that they were without the horses necessary for so extremely rapid a march, as would have made their attack upon Wareham, a surprize ; or they would not have needed afterwards

perfidiously to have acquired them, by the slaughter of Alfred's horsemen, upon the very first night after the Christians had been thrown off their guard by a simulated peace.

The probabilities are so much upon the side of it's having been a maritime expedition, that it may fairly be taken as an historical fact ; accounting not only for the success of their first attack, but also accounting for their possession of the vessels, which were subsequently lost during their attempt to convey part of their army by sea, from Wareham to Exeter.

This maritime movement appears to have been made very craftily, and in a manner calculated at first to lull Alfred's suspicion ; and next, to render him utterly uncertain as to it's ultimate direction.

By lying so long still, in Cambridge, it might have appeared that they only intended to consolidate their government of East-Anglia ; and, at the same time, to watch their tributary, the vice-king of Mercia.—The assemblage of a large fleet might indeed have excited suspicion as to a contemplated irruption ; but, if it had so done, with so extensive a sea-board to defend, Alfred could not well have gathered at any given point a force sufficient to repel them ; but could only, by stationing bands at vulnerable places, by manning all the beacons, by keeping men upon the lock-out at all the hill forts, which so abounded in that part of Wessex, as to have

rendered it almost impossible for a hostile attack to have been made, by land, without instantaneous detection ; guard against surprise, and then keep himself in readiness to march, from some central point, with his picked men, upon the menaced place.

From the celerity with which he did move down upon them, so as even to prevent their throwing up entrenchments ; it is not improbable that he was at the time near to Wilton, a point as nearly central, both in the length and in the width of Wessex, as could well have been selected ; and where he would have been like a spider in the centre of his web, with all his admonitory meshes around him.

It is clearly stated that the Pagans started from Cambridge, in the night.—By the Roman road a march of less than fifty miles, would have brought them to Mercey, on the shore of the Blackwater river, and close to the mouth of the Colne, upon that Estuary.—Standing directly across towards the North Foreland, they had only, by keeping just out of sight of land, to retain Alfred in uncertainty, until the very last moment.

Thanet, Regnum, (Chichester), Portus Magnus, (Porchester), Clausentum, (near Southampton,) were all likely places to be attacked, for they had tried them before, and knew their vulnerability.—It is quite possible that, knowing this, they might have anticipated

that those places were then duly protected, and that therefore they selected a spot where not only they had not before landed, but from which, either by the Roman road from Wareham, or by that from Poole, first entrenching themselves at Wareham, they could move by land whither they might please, or might re-embark and take their chance at any other unprotected place. —It is also quite possible that, having delighted themselves by destroying the Mausoleum of the Mercian kings, and enjoyed its plunder, they might have wished to signalize their triumph, by also plundering and destroying, both Wareham Monastery and that of Wimbourne, and by exhuming and dishonouring the remains of Ethered.

If Alfred did foresee and skilfully counteract this project, it is highly creditable to that generalship for which he had been looked up to by his nobles and his people. If he did not, it was a highly providential circumstance that he should have been so close at hand as he manifestly must have been.

His promptitude, and their possible uncertainty as to the forces he might have at hand, for no mention whatever is made of any fighting having occurred: and not improbably, the promptings of their own most consummate and unprincipled duplicity, induced them, not only at once to conclude a peace with him, upon his constantly required condition, that they should quit his dominions instantly; but to affirm it, not merely

by giving hostages, but also, and as they had never done before, by swearing upon their Armlets, the most cherished insignia of their nobility, and their most sacred form of oath; but also, hypocritically swearing upon the Christian Relics, upon the sacred nature of which Alfred, superstitiously, relied as much as they despised it.

His noble and generous nature rendered him unsuspecting, and his watchfulness might thus have been inconsiderately remitted.—Upon the very same night of this doubly religious rite, when he had sworn them in the then Christian manner, and when they had sworn, of themselves, in the most sacred form, and by those marks of distinction which, as warriors, were most dear to them, and which would have bitterly, and perpetually reproached all honorable minds; they, neither caring for oaths nor hostages, nor heeding promises, and disgracefully regardless of honour, surprised and slew all his horsemen, who had been lulled into security by the solemn compact which they had so recently witnessed.—They then, with his horses, mounted their troops, and precipitately marched into Exanceastre, (Exeter), in Domnavium, (Devonshire), on the eastern border of the Wisc; still, however, retaining possession of Wareham-Castle, which was impregnable to the attacking power of that day; and in Exeter they wintered, in 876—7.

They probably had reached this City, by the Roman road, which led directly from Wareham to Exeter.

By the destruction of his horse-soldiers, they had baffled instant pursuit; and, doubtless, had shaken the confidence of the army and people in the foresight, if not in the judgment of their king, and thus paved the way for the panic terror with which they were afterwards seized.

The Pagans thus established themselves at two points, whence they could move on either hand:—but, it is very apparent that they dreaded Alfred's skill, and valour; and dared not measure swords with him in a pitched battle.—The lion had been wounded, but he was a terrific lion still.

The Pagans remained, shut up in Exeter and in Wareham, not merely throughout the winter of 876—7, but throughout all the early part of 877.—Nor was either party idle.—After events clearly shew, that the Pagans had sought aid from beyond sea, on the one hand, and from Ubbo their brother King on the other; and, not improbably, their apparent supineness was only prudential, and to give time for the expected assistance.—Alfred also had diligently bestirred himself, not only in recruiting his army, but, in creating a Navy:—and from Asser's remark that “their numbers increased daily, so that if thirty-thousand were slain in one day, others succeeded them in redoubled num-

bers," it may be gathered, that not only active daily recruiting went on, but that there was some severe daily skirmishing as well.

In the Autumn, however, of 877, while part of their force remained in Exeter, a part retreated into Mercia for plunder; and Turner says, they then dethroned Cleolwulf, who had himself been a cruel tyrant, and base plunderer of his own nation; but Asser merely says, that they gave part of Mercia to Cleolwulf, and divided the remainder among themselves.

This proceeding, under the guise of punishing that consummate scoundrel, enabled them to arrange all their disposable force in Mercia, and to concert the ensuing year's campaign.

To counteract the operations of the Pagans, and to cut off their supplies, whilst in Exeter; Alfred had (cymbas), boats or pinnaces, (snœkke of the Norsemen) and (galcas) long ships (dragons of the Norsemen), built in the various ports throughout Wessex, in order that, by a naval force, he might intercept any approaching enemies; and he manned them, or put them in the command of hired pirate-sailors, "to keep the way of those seas," and immediately sent them to watch the Pagans, who had, by his promptitude, been shut up and besieged in Exeter, and wherein they had so wintered.

He had ordered his own ships, not to suffer reinforcements for the enemy, as I interpret the statement of Asser, to pass through (*parte freti vitale*) the strait or narrow entrance of the Estuary of the Exe—(Exmouth.)

It so happened that a fleet of one-hundred and twenty ships, laden with military stores, arrived for the assistance of their comrades ; and that, when the king's servants had ascertained that they were full of Pagan soldiers, they ardently rushed to arms and manfully attacked the barbarians.

The Pagans who had been contending against, and had been shattered by, stormy weather, in the open seas, for nearly a month ; made an useless resistance, and their closely-packed armed bands having been mangled by the shock of Alfred's vessels, " all perished alike by being submerged, in the place called Gnavewic.

Turner has altogether omitted this, upon the faith of other authorities who have consolidated this with a subsequent event.—Asser, the friend of Alfred, and who in all probability drew this, as he certainly did another part of his information, from Alfred's own mouth, makes a statement, which is not only clear in itself, but highly probable.

Alfred was desirous of cutting off supplies, both

from East Anglia and from the Continent.—This Pagan fleet manifestly came from a distance ; for they could scarcely have been beating about, nearly a month, between Poole harbour and Swanage, or even Exmouth ; and besides that, Asser, in the two events, which are described close together in his record, distinguishes the places by different names.

It is not at all unlikely that the Pagans were endeavouring to make the mouth of the Exe ; that they were intercepted, or were pursued by the blockading squadron ; and, being impetuously rushed upon, heeled, and were capsized, by the convulsed motion of their own burthen of armed men ; for such I understand to be Asser's meaning.

In this case, the whole fleet is said to have been, exactly one-hundred and twenty ships ; but, in the next, Asser expressly says that “ out of the whole fleet,” one hundred and twenty perished ; and he distinctly marks it as having been a separate occurrence, in these words. “ In this same year, 877, the Pagan army, deserting Werham, partly on horseback, and partly in ships ; out of those which went by sea, one hundred and twenty ships were wrecked, when they arrived at the place called Suanavine.”

From the resemblance of the name, and from it's being in their track, this would seem to have occurred near to Swanwich, usually now called Swanage, in the

Isle of Purbeck ; and as no mention is made, by Asser, of their having been attacked, it is possible that, having been so heavily laden with military stores and men, as barely to swim in the comparatively smooth water of Poole harbour, notwithstanding it's double tides ; they might have gone down in no very heavy storm, when in the rougher water of "the Channel," especially if they had also been caught in the ebb-current which sets from the Solent into Poole Harbour.

I conceive Gnave-wic, or bay, to have been, Babi-combe-bay ; and, as in the next century, the marauding Danes landed at Teignmouth, and ravaged the adjacent country, it is quite possible that it might have been in revenge for the loss of this fleet in that bay.

Alfred himself pursued the equestrian army from Wareham, by the Roman road, until they reached Exeter ; and, in all probability, they suffered severe loss in consequence of his attacks, for that there he exacted and received from them hostages, and bound them, again, by oaths quickly to depart his country.

Having lost two fleets, and at least some three or four thousand men, and a vast quantity of military stores in them, and, finding Alfred to be so much on the alert, and again provided with an equestrian army ; the Pagans appear to have temporised, and to have sworn to any treaty, and to have made any promises which he required.

These events appear to have occurred in the earlier part of the year 877, that is, before August.

In August, part of the army, perhaps that part which had suffered in it's march from Wareham to Exeter ; moved from Exeter into Mercia, ostensibly to punish Cleolwulf, and also to comply with the condition of the last peace to which they had sworn ; but, really to place Alfred between two armies.—The remainder quitted Exeter in January 878 ; and it would seem that Alfred credulously relied upon this movement as being in full completion of their compact with him ; for, in this only way can one account for his having been unprovided with an armed force :—and, in addition to this easy, good faith on his part, it was at a season in which both Pagans and Christians were wont to rest, and each to celebrate the solemnities, and to indulge in the feastings and recreations sanctioned by their respective creeds.

If there were no direct road leading from West to East through Somersetshire ; which seems to be hardly probable, seeing that there was such a road across North-Devon, and another from the East side of Somersetshire across Wiltshire ; and so on to London ; still they must have taken to that Roman road, which, leading through Ilchester and Bath to Cirencester, and so on to Lincoln, traversed the centre of Mercia.

This being their right road homeward, Alfred may

well be excused for having suffered his noble nature to be deceived, by as false a race of men as it seems possible to conceive ; in whom there was neither humanity, honour, nor honesty, and who had no one redeeming good quality, but mere brute courage. It is only marvellous, that the descendants of such men should be humane, and upright, and honest, and honourable.

Turning but seven miles out of the direct road, upon which they were legitimately travelling in apparent fulfilment of their oaths ; they suddenly fell upon a people, rendered defenceless by their own good faith, and took possession of the Royal town of Cippanhamme, in the West of Wiltshire, and upon the Eastern bank of the River Avon ; and here they wintered.

This last act of consummate treachery broke the spirit of the Christians, worn down and reduced as their slender, although brave, numbers had been by many years of exertion ; their own numerical strength continually decreasing, and that of their enemies as continually increasing ; and, excepting themselves, the whole country, Britons as well as Saxons, bowing beneath the Pagan yoke.

Their King, brave, skilful, high-spirited, and generous as he was ; and always resolutely bearing up against the cruel bodily disorder which afflicted him, in defence of his people ; had, not unpardonably, allowed himself to be deceived by the perjuries of a

people, whom neither oath nor pledge could possibly bind.

In the deepest despair, many of the Christians, compelled by war, by penury, and by fear, fled beyond sea; and the Pagans subjected to their dominion the greater part of the wretched remainder of the inhabitants of that region.

Apparently the Country was totally lost.

Where Alfred and his family were at that time does not appear.—Not improbably his family were at Wimbourne, and he also there, still watching, and probably joyfully hailing the departure of the Pagans from Exeter, as the consummation of his generous policy.

When he heard of their unprincipled treachery, his heart seems to have sunk within him.—The Country, and the Christian cause seemed to be doomed.—Deserted by his people, he could only flee and hide his head.—In Asser's words. In great tribulation, with a few of his nobles, and with some soldiers and vassals, he led a harassed life, hidden in the house of one of his own herdsmen, in the woody and swampy places of Somersetshire.—There he had nothing for subsistence, excepting that which he acquired by frequent stealthy, or open irruptions, against the Pagans, as well as against those abject men who had submitted to the Pagan domination.

In the same year, 878, and therefore most probably in concert with Godrun and his allies: Ubbo the only survivor of the three original leaders, (Inguar, Halfden, and Hubba,) of the Pagans; and he who had most distinguished himself by his cruelties at the massacre in Peterborough, arrived from one of his devastating inroads upon South-Wales, with an armament of twenty-three ships; he having wintered there and committed much slaughter among the Christians.

It is not unlikely that he had intended to have landed at Bude-haven, near to Stratton in Cornwall, whence a Roman road traversed into and across Devonshire from West to East, and probably ran in that direction into the road at Bath, that so he might have joined the main army at Chippenham.

Perhaps, mistaking the estuary of the Taw and the Torridge, in Barnstaple-bay, for the harbour he had been directed to, Bude-haven in Widemouth bay; or perhaps tempted by the opportune chance, of taking some vessels in that River-harbour, he rashly endeavoured to land, but was slain before the castle of Kynwit in North Devon, (Domnania,) along with twelve hundred of his followers, by Odun, Earl of Devon, and the King's servants; for, in that Citadel, many of the King's servants, with their people, had shut themselves up, as in a place of refuge.

Asser's account goes on to say.—But when the

Pagans observed that the Citadel was unprotected by any defences, excepting that it merely had a wall built after the country manner, they would not even take the trouble of destroying it, for that the situation of the place is such as to be safe from attack at all points, excepting on the East, but began to surround it, thinking that those men, being straitened by the blockade, would be delivered into their hands by hunger and thirst, for there was no water near to it. It did not however fall out as they expected.

By divine instigation, before the Christians would expose themselves wholly to such an extremity; they, considering that it would be much preferable to deserve either victory or death, at the earliest day-break, burst out impetuously, fell upon the Pagans, and in the first onset, overthrew the greater part of the hostile army with it's King, a few only having escaped to their ships by flight:—and there they took no small spoil; amongst which they also captured that Standard which the Pagans called Reafan:—for they said that three sisters of Hungar and Hubba, and daughters of Lodebrock had woven that Standard and completely embellished (or embroidered) it in the space of one morning:—they also said, that in every engagement which that ensign preceded, if the victory was to be theirs, it appeared as if a living raven was flying in the midst of it; but, if they were to be conquered, then it hung perpendicularly and immoveable.

Asser, in endeavouring to trace the causes which led to Alfred's desperate state, remarks, that not only did God vouchsafe to this most vain-glorious of Kings, victory over his enemies and triumph over his adversaries—but in benignity, he allowed him to be vexed by enemies, to be afflicted by adversities, and even to be held up to the contempt of his own people; that he might know there is but one God to whom every knee should bow, in whose hand are the hearts of Kings, who puts down the powerful from the throne and exalts the humble; and that God sometimes tries his faithful ones, when in their highest prosperity, by the scourges of adversity; in order that neither should the depressed despair of His mercy, nor should those exult who are in honour; but that they should know they owe all things which they have to Him.

He adds, that in the early part of his reign, when his subjects came to him for relief, when those who were oppressed by men in power implored his aid, he would neither listen to, nor aid, but wholly neglected them:—that his relative Saint Neotus, for his sins, predicted that the greatest adversity would befall him, but that Alfred cared little for his rebuke, and would not heed his prediction:—and, because that men must either be punished here or hereafter, Alfred often fell into such miseries, that no one of his subjects knew where he was or what had become of him.

In this, his last, bitter extremity of misery and hu-

miliation, he learnt the severe, but divine lesson, that people are not made for the support of the silly ostentation, or the unfeeling luxury of kings, but that kings are placed and maintained by the Almighty, in their exalted and revered station, for the benefit, and blessing, and service of their people : and that British people, equally with, if not above all others, while they abhor, and revolt against tyrants, heartily love, and cheerfully support and defend good kings.—He now resolved to subdue his own selfishness, to forego his own temporary pleasure or advantage, steadily to discharge his kingly duties, neither to neglect, nor to prey upon, nor to oppress, nor to suffer his nobles, nor servants, to oppress, nor to prey upon his people.—He, nobly, perilled his life for them ; they, joyfully, perilled their lives for him : and, in the utmost depth of his vilest degradation, the moment which saw him rise up a repentant and a patriot king, saw gather around him a gradually increasing, brave and indignant people, sternly resolved, under God's blessing, to die, or to redeem their country.—And both he and they, pursued their object faithfully, steadily, skilfully, and successfully.

Neither he nor they, afterwards forgot their reciprocal duties.—He ruled humanely, considerately, and wisely : they obeyed gratefully, willingly, and devotedly :—and, as their conquest, by the Pagans, shewed the certain destruction which must attend disunion ; the victory of the Christians over Guthrun, and espe-

cially their subsequent triumphs over Hastings, beautifully displayed the assured prosperity which blesses the union of a patriotic king and a patriotic people.

After Easter, in the same year 878, Alfred, with a few of his followers built a citadel in *Æthelingæg*; and from that fortified post, in conjunction with his nobles and vassals of Somersetshire, continually, and indefatigably waged war against the Pagans.

In the seventh week after Easter he rode to the stone *Ægbryhta*, (thirty miles in a straight line from *Athelney*), which lies in the Eastern part of Selwood forest.

There, were assembled all those inhabitants of Somersetshire, Wiltshire, and Hampshire, who had not fled beyond sea, and who exultingly received him as one who had risen from the dead.—There they entrenched themselves for one night. — Thence, by the earliest dawn of the succeeding day, they marched to *Æcglea*, and there they entrenched themselves for one night.—Thence, also by the earliest dawn, he advanced his Standard to *Ethandum*, and in a densely-compacted, shield-interlocked body, they fiercely charged the whole Pagan army; and, persisting long and vigorously in the attack, by divine aid, they at length gained the victory:—they overthrew the Pagans with great slaughter, and harassed the fugitives, beating them down until they reached their Citadel. All that he met with outside the fortified Camp or Citadel, men, horses, or

flocks, he intercepted, instantly killing the men. He boldly entrenched himself before the gate, with all his army, and there blockaded the enemy for fourteen days, until the Pagans, driven to extremity by hunger, fear, and cold, (an interestingly corroborative circumstance, for, although it was verging upon the middle of May, it yet was not only the last breath of "black-thorn-winter," but the winds, ranging over the extensive sweep of country, are always felt severely at that place,) and terrified into desperation, earnestly begged for peace, upon condition that the King, should nominate and accept from them as many hostages as he might please; and that he should not give any hostages to them; so that at length they proposed such a peace as had never before been made.

Their embassy having been heard by the King; he, moved by his own compassion, nominated as many hostages as he saw fit: which having been received by him, the Pagans forthwith swore that they would quit Wessex with the utmost rapidity.—Godrun their King also promised to become a Christian, and to accept baptism at the hands of Alfred.

All which was fulfilled on either side: and, after seven weeks preparation, Godrun and thirty of the most distinguished men of his army, were baptized at Alre, near to Æthelingæg; and Alfred received Godrun as the son of his adoption; and the chrisming was

kept for eight days, in the Royal residence of Wœdmor, nearly five miles distant from the present Axbridge.

He remained twelve nights with the King, who munificently presented to him and to his officers many and splendid houses.

In 879, Gothrun, now named Athelstan, removed to Cirrenceastre; and in 880, and in the thirty-second year of Alfred's age, they quitted Cirencester, and settling in East Anglia, divided the lands amongst them.

* * * * *

This account was thoroughly comprehensible in the days of Asser; but, modern ignorance of the real situation of the respective places which he has named, has made such a tangled web of it, that the truth seems to be perfectly inextricable.

The situation of Æthelingæg, or Atheling-æ, or eye, appears, by something like the general consent of writers, to have been the modern Isle of Athelney, at the junction of the Tone, which runs from Wellington and Taunton on the West; of the Yeo, from Yeovil and Ilchester on the South-east; and of another stream

from Somerton, nearly due East, which uniting, form the river Pedrida, or Parret.

At that time it consisted of but, about, two acres of dry land, surrounded by a morass, covered with Alder trees; and excepting by boats, or by a bridge at the western end, it was quite inaccessible.

But, where Ethandum was, is lost in the mist of time.

By other authors the place is called Assandune, Edderandun, and Ethandune.—Camden, Gibson, Gough, Hoare, and Freeman, (in his map) fix it as at Eddington, near to Westbury, in Wiltshire; and conceive that Bratton-Castle was the fortified post to which the Pagans fled; and the representation of a White Horse on the side of the Chalk hill is considered to have been made in commemoration of the fight; but it unfortunately happens that, in 1742, Wise was informed that it was formed within then living memory.

Milner thinks it was at Heddington, about a mile north of an ancient Camp upon Roundway, Beacon, or Bagdon hill, and about three miles North-north-west of Devizes; and that the Pagans took refuge in Oldbury Camp, near to which there is also a White-Horse; but which is certainly modern, for it is not only well-drawn, but, unfortunately for its antiquity, has a docked and nicked tail,

Lysons, thinks it was at Heddington near to Hungerford in Berkshire, which is thirty-five miles from Brixton Deverill or Ægbryhta-stan, and therefore too far away for the Christian army to get fresh into the field.

Whitaker, thinks the battle was fought at Yatton, five miles from Chippenham, and that the Pagans retreated to a Camp in North-wood, Bury-wood, upon Colerne down, on the Fosse way near to Wraxhall and Slaughter-ford.

If it were worth while to add to this pretty confusion, a claim might be put in for Edington upon the range of hills, five miles, nearly East, from Bridgwater, Somersetshire, and the retreat of the Pagans placed at a camp close to the Roman roadway from Exmoor through Bridgwater, to Portishead on the Bristol Channel.

The situation of Æcglea is in just as glorious an uncertainty.—Claims have been set up for Leigh, near to Westbury, for Highley^{*} near to Whadden, for Clee-Hill, near to Warminster, and for some place in Berkshire.

Not improbably it was a patch of Oak trees, in a meadow or plain; and, these having been swept away, it's real place will never be ascertained.

If the situations of ancient forts and camps were to be taken into consideration, it would be exceedingly

* *This appears to be the most probable. RH*

difficult to know where to stay conjecture in a County so thickly studded with such relics as the whole country around Salisbury Plain has been ; and it is curious to observe how nearly these lie upon straight lines, which may often be drawn to pass through three, or four, and in one instance through six of them, connecting Buckland rings, Hauts, with Salisbury Hill, in Gloucestershire.

The place of *Ægbryhta-stan* is stated to have been in the Eastern part of Selwood forest, which stretched from Peonna or Penselwood, at least to the Avon, even if it were not joined to Melksham, Chippenham, and Braden Forest, and connected with the Chase at Devizes.—Selwood Forest chiefly consisted of Willow trees.—Westbury appears to have been upon its Eastern border ; but, as all North Wilts had been thickly covered by trees, it is not unlikely, that the great valley south of Devizes was at least well sheltered ; and that, among the woods there might have been one, distinctly named *Æglea*. This valley used, in bad weather, as Sir William Waller found it, to be “among the worst of ways,” and in those early times might have been still much worse marching ground.

It does not appear unreasonable to take it as true that Brixton-Deverell was the site of *Ecbryht* stone.

Where was *Æglea*?—Asser says it was a day's march distant.—Clay or Clee-hill is but four miles and

a half from Brixton Deverell, and one cannot think that, a day's march for an army which started by day break in the middle of May, with above fifteen hours light : while it is six miles and a half from Eddington, to reach which, so as to surprise the Pagans, the army had also to start by day break.—It is also to be remarked that the line of march from Clay Hill to Eddington, would have been past Bratton Castle or Camp, in which one cannot but suppose there must have been some troops, to have seen them pass close by it, and therefore to have given the alarm, however careless and secure the main body might have been.

Milner's selection of Heddington does not appear to be liable to such material objections : Heddington is now but a small village at the foot of this western end of the Chalk-formation. On the northern side of this spur from the range of downs is Oldbury, an ancient British Camp, very irregularly oval, inclosed with two complete lines of circumvallation home to the precipitous northern side of the hill, and having the inner vallum returned so as to flank the entrance, which is also protected by outworks. All is now in much confusion. It is made conspicuous from the high-road between Calne and Marlborough, by an obelisk lately erected by the Marquis of Lansdowne, and which is said to be visible from Wales. Upon the southern side is the enclosure called Roundway, or Oliver's Castle. These points are four miles and a half apart. From Roundway Castle the prospect towards Bath is

very extensive, but shut in by the high ground of Salisbury Plain from Bratton Castle eastward. From Oldbury the panoramic view is most splendid, especially towards the north, west and east.—Taking the two points, all North Wilts is at your feet.

Heddington is by the map, eighteen miles, in a direct line, from Brixton Deverill, about a mile from Roundway Camp, six miles from Chippenham, about half a mile from the Wansdyke, one mile from the Roman road, between *Aquæ Solis*, and *Cunctio* (Mildenhall) the ancient station *Verlucio* being upon the road, at one mile and a quarter from Heddington; —Oldbury Camp is three miles and a half north east of the latter place, and about three quarters of a mile north of the Roman road, upon higher ground, but separated from Roundway-down by the valley in which Heddington and Calstone lie. The ascent to Roundway, or Oliver's camp, is steep on the southern and western sides, but it is easily accessible, from the Eastward, in the vicinity of the present New Park, and the ascent to Oldbury from Cherhill on it's northern front is practicable with steady exertion, but very sharp.

This to a Civilian's eye, would appear to be a very strong position, and one to which one might readily suppose the Pagan army might have moved across the hill-ground and the vale from Chippenham, as good Spring quarters, and better situate for observing any hostile movement, and with the lines of the Wansdyke

and of the Roman road, and with the then remains of Verlucio and of Oldbury Camp to retire upon, if attacked on either hand, well calculated for defence; and if the battle really took place here, Alfred's daring would be vastly enhanced by these circumstances:—Nor is it at all improbable, that these Pagans, who scarcely ever moved without entrenching themselves, might have been posted in a really strong position, although in the drunken license of a time of, apparently, the most perfect security from an enemy whom they had crushed into the dust, they might have been very careless in guarding it.

Taking it that *Æcglea*, means Oakfield or meadow, —as Selwood Forest consisted of Willow trees, it is not very likely, although not impossible, that there was a wood of oaks among them; or, one might conjecture that Alfred traversed the country under concealment of the Forest, so as to get to the northward of Eddington, and thence to have pounced down upon and driven the Pagans back into Bratton Camp.

Mr. Walker's hint that Alfred might have marched between Bratton Castle and Eddington, so as to have cut the enemy off from their Camp, has two difficulties in it's way:—first, that he would have risked placing himself between two fires,—and next that the Pagans must have cut their way through the Christians, or they could not have regained their Camp.

Indeed there does not seem to have been any very cogent reason for the Pagans to have moved their head quarters so far from Chippenham as to Bratton, when their enemy was no more.—

An accurate, and military knowledge of the country could alone decide between the respective claims of Eddington and Heddington; but it would seem that the distance of the latter place from *Ægbryhta-stan* would better accord with the marching time stated by Asser, than would that of Eddington, which, by the most direct way, does not exceed ten miles from the same starting point.—I am much inclined to suggest, that Alfred and his people, so well knowing the country as they must have done, and especially after his later predatory attacks, and his espial of the Pagan Camp, marched from Brixton Deverill, under shelter of the waving ground, and of the thickets and other wood land, either past Warminster and between Westbury, Trowbridge, and Melksham on the west, and Devizes on the east, and so might have fallen upon Heddington from the west, or else to some point Eastward of Roundway, or Bagdon Hill, keeping so far away as to be out of sight and hearing of their opponents; and having had one night's rest; in an oak field or wood, at break of day might have passed over the Hill, by its accessible Eastern side at New Park and a little to the North of Roundway Castle or Camp; and, penetrating westward, cut them off from retreating to Chippenham, or even from taking post upon the ruins of

Verlucio ; and then drove them from Heddington along the valley and past Calstone into Oldbury Castle or Camp, and there locked them in.—

Seeing that Alfred's predatory attacks from Athelney were, in all probability, upon the Western side of the Pagan Camp, and possibly also from the Southward ; he might have found them less prepared upon the Eastern side, when he, in disguise, examined their camp ; and therefore have marched so as to turn their position, and thus to make his sudden and daring attack more certain.

It may be objected that the distance of Heddington from Athelney, would have been an obstacle to Alfred, in his exploratory visit to the Pagan Camp, but when it is considered that the distances from Athelney to Eddington or to Heddington are as thirty seven miles to forty-four, the additional seven miles would have made but little difference to so bold a hunter and warrior as he was.

The commemorative White Horse upon Bratton Hill, as well as that upon Oldbury Hill ; and Alfred's tower near to the beacon of Jack's Castle, are all of comparatively modern date. Neither of them can therefore affect the question. Nor can much reliance be placed upon the discovery of warlike relics, for that nearly all Wiltshire appears to have been sown with them so thickly as to set at defiance any attempt to establish the site of

any particular battle by them: yet it has to be considered that this end of the down land has at least it's full share of such testimonies.

* * * * *

Thus terminated the Defence of Wessex, against the unrighteous war of conquest, waged by the Sons of Ragnar Lodbrock.

The defence of England against the like pertinacious attacks of the bold, but unprincipled Hastings, may have been more glorious; but, although it's history brings into prominent relief all Alfred's high qualities, and shews how The Patriot King was nobly rewarded in the unbounded attachment of his admiring people; yet it does not so distinctly shew how surely prosperity attends the union of Prince and People;—how, in God's providential ruling, adversity as certainly befalls both King and People whenever they forget their bounden duties to each other:—and how prosperity as certainly arises from the extremest depth of misery, when King and People place themselves in God's hands:—and how little to be despaired of is that country, in which all classes unite heart and hand to guard it against aggression.

Barely two acres of solid ground, in the midst of a

quaking morass, held all Wessex in her utmost adversity.—From that two acres of solid ground, her chastened, her penitent, her patriotically resolved king, not only reconquered all that had been lost, but became all but Monarch of all the Southern half of Britain; and, from a homeless fugitive, arose the best, the noblest, the most renowned, the best beloved of all England's kings; revered, almost adored by his people; respected and honoured by surrounding nations:—the Country and the King beautifully illustrating the wise man's observation, "righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is the destruction of any people."

* * * * *

Very ingenious parallels have been drawn between the lives of remarkable men, and a skilful writer might make an interesting and instructive comparison between Alfred, and The Man after God's own heart: due and reverential allowance being made for the wide difference of situation of the one, as divinely chosen, and of the other, as merely selected by an earthly parent.

Judœa had, for it's idolatry, been given into the hands of the surrounding Pagans, and been repeatedly subjected by them.

England, either possessed in part by Pagans, or en-

ervated by a lethargic and idolatrous superstition, was chastened by Pagan invaders.

David the youngest son of Jesse, a youth of beautiful countenance, was, by divine selection, anointed by Samuel the Prophet, as the future king of Israel: the Jews then having a king, and that king having a Son.—Yet, although he became the conqueror of Goliath, an inmate of the Royal House, and beloved by all the people, and conscious of his, really, divine right to the throne; he invariably, and under the most trying circumstances never forgot his respect and allegiance to his King; and never attempted to assume power, until that it pleased God to make his way clear, by the death of Saul; and even then he lamented the death which opened to him the path of honour.

Alfred, the youngest of Æthelwulf's sons, of beautiful person, was selected by his father, and was anointed by Leo, the head of the then corrupted, but Christian Church, as the future King.—Caressed by Kings, beloved by all, and conscious of his high dignity, he yet zealously obeyed each of his three elder brethren, and never attempted to assume the throne, until they had all been removed by death; and even then reluctantly took it, until, agreeably to the laws of his country, he had been duly selected by the people.

David was a most pious, nay an inspired man, yet

sinned he most grievously in his cruelty and lust,—and as bitterly repented.

Alfred was singularly pious from his very childhood,—yet sinned in petulance, intemperance and in cruel judgments, and was only saved from incontinence by most earnest prayer. He also bitterly repented.

David was an inspired poet, a musician, and dancer,—and a consummate warrior.

Alfred ardently loved and excelled in poetry, and music, and bodily exercises:—and was a skilful warrior.

David, for his grievous sins, was rebelled against by his son Absalom, driven from his throne, deserted by his people, opprobriously insulted by Shimei, and led a wandering life in sorrow, and in penitence.—He was ultimately restored to his throne, and died in honour.

Alfred, for his sins, was deserted by his people, driven from his throne, fled into miserable obscurity, led a life of privation and hardship.—He was wonderfully restored to his dignity, and died in honour.

David's memory was beloved, and is still revered, not only by his countrymen, but by all the world, as one of the best of the Jewish Kings.

Alfred's memory was cherished, and is still revered, not only by Englishmen, but by all nations which have heard his history, as a truly good, and truly patriot King ; the best of his rank.

Neither David, nor Alfred are held up as having possessed superhuman perfection. Great and good as they both were, they still were mortal, subject to the infirmities and vices, and sins of men, and both were punished for their crimes by the same unerring divine providence : and both will, probably, be honoured to the latest posterity of their respective nations, as ensamples of such Kingly virtues as but seldom bless the Earth.

CHALFONT.

Oh, have you gazed on the morning's hue?
Oh, have you breathed the fresh morning's dew?
Oh, have you listened and listened still
As the morn-breeze swept down the crisped hill,
Loading it's wings with the streamlet's wealth,
Whispering of peace, of joy, of health?

Have you e'er dwelt on the bee's sweet song,
And watched him riot the flowers among?
And have you noted the insect glee,
The bounding, the whirling revelry,
And seen them winnow the glad sun beam,
And dart and flash, like the diamond's gleam?

Has e'er your eager, unsated sense,
Drank deep of that music's eloquence,
Until you have heard, or seemed to hear
Legions of fairies trooping near;
Have seen them glance as meteors by
Carolling their honied minstrelsy,

Have seen them couch in the dew-bent rose,
Have seen them the lily's fair cup uncloze,
Have watched them cling to the fox-glove's stem,
And dance on the green-sward's diadem,
And hide and seek among dew-drops bright,
Spangling the earth with heaven's own light ?

Oh, have you felt from the clear, cold sky
The thrill of the soaring lark's melody ?
Have you mounting, mounting, seen him rise
A spirit of joy in his native skies ?
Oh, have you chorussed his grateful hymn ?
Have you ever praised your God, like him ?

And, have you fled when the fervid sun
Has flamed, has blazed in his highest noon,
And cooled your brow in the linden's shade,
Drawn in the breath of the perfumed glade,
And dreamt that the sweet-briar, flowering nigh,
Was laden with zephyrs from Araby ?

While the new-mown hay has wafted along
On it's odorous gale the maiden's song,
And the land-rail's creak, here, there, or here,
Jarred and bewildered the wondering ear,
And the merry chaffinch chattered with glee,
His sharp short note from the holmen tree ?

Oh, have you e'er, when the calm, clear even,
Cools the wide arch of the sultry heaven,



When the bright, white fleck turns sober grey,
When the red flush marks declining day,
And the glow ascending higher and higher,
Earth is roofed over with fretted fire ;

And, athwart the glory, come streaming home
The daw and rook from their distant roam,
And hover, and sweep around their nest,
And drowsily clamour themselves to rest ;
While swift, and flitter-mouse dazzle the eye,
And the round black dorr comes droning by ?

Oh, have you e'er, in that witching hour
Owned all it's blest, soul-subduing power,
And bowed, and bent the reverent knee,
And worshipped Heaven's sole Majesty ?
Oh, have you e'er in that holiest mood,
Clung to, and loved such sweet solitude,

And watched the still, white, evening steam,
Climb from the far down low-gurgling stream,
Spreading it's billowy tresses chill
Over lea, and meadow, and plain, and hill ;
And watched until the cressets on high
Chequered with gold the calm-sleeping sky :

And watched, still watched, while the placid moon
Trod her trackless path towards night's deep noon ;
And dwelt on the ban-dog's baying howl,
And shrunk from the hiss of the startled owl,

And trembled, dismayed, as the harsh night-jar
Proclaimed ruin, havoc, distress, and war :

Yet lingered, lingered, yet lingered still,
Loving the gloom of the slumbering hill ;
Yet lingered, lingered, yet lingered on,
'Till each fading trace of day was gone,
Nor until then, sought your lowly rest,
Cradling in hope upon heaven's breast ?

If thus you have felt, then come with me ;
Gaze on yon high, embowering tree,
Gaze on the spruce fir, the pine, the larch,
Gaze on the barberry's pensile arch,
Gaze on each leaf, each tendril, each stem,
Gaze on the mosses which cling to them,

Gaze, gaze with me : yet gaze silently,
Heave not the spirit-relieving sigh,
Speak not, and move not : I would be still,
Would think 'till memory have had her fill,
Would think 'till she pour her gushing tear :—
My last, sad, step has been trodden here.

Chalfont ! endeared by The Poet's tread,
Along thy Mist-bourne's rush-fringed bed ;
Thou, thou hast heard the entranced song
Echo thy orchards, thy woods among,
And wondered, in awe, as the deep-toned note,
In each breath, each zephyr, each gale would float.

Thou canst glory in Milton's mighty strain,
Such song as Earth shall not hear again ;
And I would embalm thee while Memory
Shall in her dark, secret chamber lie,
And Silence and Contemplation still
Shall walk in joy on thy breezy hill.

I may not see thy fair charms again :
Fettered and bound to the haunts of men,
Linked, tightly linked to the harsh turmoil,
The City's anxious, unceasing toil,
I can but think of thy meads of peace,
I can but dream of thy bowers of bliss.

Yet can I treasure, in this chill breast,
The pleasures which cling around thy rest :
And whenever the breeze shall by me float,
Whenever I hear each rustic note,
Can close my eyes, and fly back to thee
On the lightning wings of memory.

I thus can again thy borders tread,
There converse hold with the dear-loved dead ;
There see compassion bedew her eye
At the sacred call of misery,
And gladly again around dispense
The stores of her wide beneficence :

Can think, if I hear a sheep-bell nigh,
If a cawing rook sail slowly by,

If a garden wren before me glance,
If the mavis' note my soul entrance,
Can think of thee,—and the grateful tear,
Shall roll on to Acton's honoured bier.

The minstrel's harp may with pleasure ring,
The minstrel band may exulting sing,
The bard's high lay may ennoble all,
In court of king or in baron's hall,
But nor poet's fire, nor minstrel's art,
Could exalt that kindness-ennobled heart.

The tree has fallen, it's glory fled :

* * * * *

Man may not pray for the unconscious dead :
As it has fallen, so must it lie,
In the bosom of lone Eternity :
But, oh, may He who once came to save
Man from the fiery penal grave,
Atone for her sin, and before The Throne,
Rejoice in a spirit for ever his own.

THE VALEDICTION.

Should any kind-hearted, adventurous, and persevering reader, have toiled thus far, without desiring to obliterate the V, and to substitute an M, for his waste of time:—should any one have derived, from my solitary amusement, a momentary pleasure:—should any one have met with a stray passage, which he may wish to store in memory:—but especially, should any one have been, though but a little, improved either in head, or heart:—I will not say it will sufficiently,—it will over-reward my labour; for, it has already been sufficiently rewarded in my own incommunicable enjoyment:—and, if it do not cheer my downward path, it will at least cause one pretty flower to bloom around my feet.

Hoping, that in this song-coining, I have neither disgraced my relatives, my friends, my fellow-citizens, nor my Brother Haberdashers, in good, old, citizen fashion.

I bid you all, most heartily,

Farewell,

RICHARD KELSEY.

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